The Loucheux Indians

Mackenzie Delta Research Project

The Amerindians of the Canadian North-West in the 19th Century, as seen by Émile Petitot

Volume II: The Loucheux Indians

Preceded by general observations on the *Dènè-dindjié* Indians

edited by Donat Savoie

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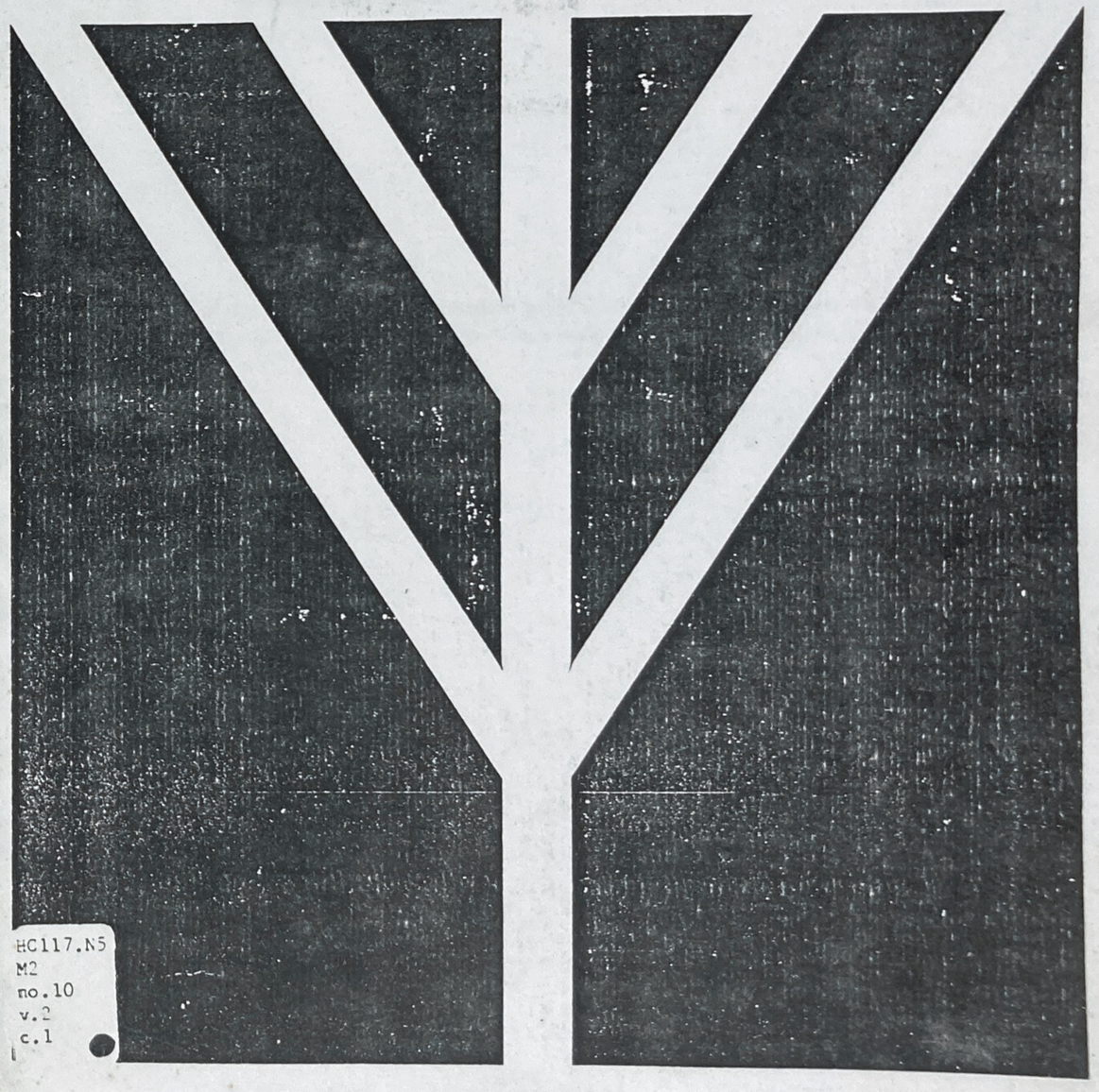
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa

Northern Science Research Group



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THE AMERINDIANS OF THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST IN THE 19th CENTURY, AS SEEN BY ÉMILE PETITOT.

Volume II: THE LOUCHEUX INDIANS

Preceded by general observations on
the *Dèné-dindjié* Indians

edited by Donat Savoie

Copies of this report may be obtained on application to the Chief, Northern Science Research Group, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

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A draft translation of this report was made by the annotator himself in an attempt to render as faithfully as possible the views of Émile Petitot. The translation was then gone over by a copy editor. We would like to thank Mr. L.A.C.O. Hunt, for his lively, sensitive rendition of the Loucheux legends.

"We have faith in you and in your word; we are sure we will not be disappointed. Father Petitot, we look upon you as our father, despite your youthfulness; we give ourselves unreservedly to you and to the religion that you preach. You are already a *Dènè-yaltpii* (dènè priest) by reputation; be also a *Dindjié pagenxi* (dindjié priest)."

1. Émile Petitot

PHONOLOGIC NOTES

"The *Dènè-dindjié* alphabet comprises eight vowels, two semi-vowels, twenty-one consonants and forty compound consonants: seventy-one letters altogether.

The eight vowels are: A, Œ, È, É, I, O, U and Ü.

A, É, È, I and O are pronounced as in Latin and French.

Œ is like the mute E in French. It is sounded EU as in the French words *oeuf* and *heures;* ex.: *al'vœl'* (I am swinging) *yénishœn* (I am thinking).

U is always pronounced OO as in Italian. *Udi* (weakness), is pronounced *oodi.*

U is our French U. It is used only among the tribes of the Rocky Mountains.

The two semi-vowels are W and Y. W has the sound of OU, forming a diphthong with the following vowel or syllable and the preceding consonants; ex.: *fwa* (sand), pronounced *fwah*, in a single sound, as in the French *foi*; *wiya* (I have gone) is pronounced *we-yah* in two distinct sounds, the first as in the diphthong *oui*! (we).

Y has the same sound as in *yole*, *yack*, *yoryk*; it is never pronounced as in the French words *royaume*, or *ayant*. When preceded by U, it forms a diphthong and is pronounced *jia*.

The twenty-one simple consonants are: B, X, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, Ñ, P, R, ρ, S, S, T, Ṭ, V and Z.

B is pronounced as in the French *baie;* ex.: *ban* (his-or her-mother). χ expresses a palatal blowing, it is the Greek sound of the letter "chi" or the J or guttural G of the Spanish, as in *baraja*, *bijo*; ex.: *χan* (mother).

D is pronounced as in the French words *dame*, and *dernier*; ex.: *oda* (opening).

F is pronounced as in the French word *faim*; ex.: *fa* (a long time).

G has always a hard sound, even in front of *e* or *i*, or in front of *a* or *o*. It is pronounced as in the French words *gamme*, *gangue* and *guerre*; ex.: *gu* (worm); *gè* (path), pronounced *gou*, *guè*; *égis* (convulsion), pronounced *éguis*.

H has the same aspirate sound as in the French words *hibou* and *héros*; ex.: *hè* (with), *kèni* (as). This particular letter is seldom used. I usually replace it with a circumflex accent on the vowel that must be aspirated. When the aspiration is very stong and causes a hiatus, it is expressed by open quotes; ex.: "*a* (snowshoe); "*el* (lock, lock-gate).

J is pronounced as in the French word *jour*; ex.:*éjial* (tanned).

K is like *c* in the French words *car*, and *comme*: ex.: *éku* (then), *kéni* (sap).

L is pronounced as in the French words *lent*, and *lire*: ex.: *la* (tip), *lié* (kitten).

M as in the French words *main* and *maman*; ex.: *mon* (his-or her-mother), *man* (bad).

N is pronounced as in the French words *nation* and *nez*; ex.: *niniya* (I arrived). It is always sounded whether it occurs in the middle or at the end of a word. If, however, there is a dot under it (ṇ), the n takes on a nasal sound as in the French words *bon*, *pain* or *main*, and forms a hiatus with the following vowel; ex.: "*an-ésya* (I got lost).

N is pronounced as the palatalized *gn* in the Spanish words *Señor*, *reñia*; it is a syncope; ex.: *ño* (he says) pronounced as a palatalized gno. It is used by the Loucheux, and sometimes, but rarely, by the Hareskins.

P is pronounced as in the French *pape*; ex.: *par* (mittens).

R has a smooth sound, as in French; ex.: *áré* (my friend).

ρ is the rolling guttural, R of the Arabs ex.: *ρan* (brain), *ρadè* (even); *ρéna* (he lives).

S is pronounced as in the French words *soleil* and *surseoir*; ex.: *sa* (sun); *sis* (unknown). Even within a word, it retains its sibilance and does not take the Z sound between two vowels; ex.: *yésa* (I am walking) pronounces *yéssa*, not yéza.

S has a sound which is intermediate between S and CH. In pronouncing S, let the tongue rest on the roof of the mouth. It is peculiar to the Loucheux and the Hareskin.

T is pronounced as in the French words *temps* and *tarir*; ex.: *tata* (illness); *éta* (cape); *étè* (horn).

Ṭ has a sound which is intermediate between *t* and *tch*. It sounds like TJ. Pronounce T with clenched teeth. This sound also is peculiar to the Loucheux and Hareskin Indians; ex.: *séta* (my eyes).

V is pronounced as in the French words *vin*, and *vase*; ex.: *vén* (around), *van* (evening). It is peculiar to the Loucheux and to the *Dènès* of the Mountains.

Z has the same sound as in the French *zèbre*: ex.: *éza* (footfall); *ézi* (body).

The forty double consonants are divided into six reduplicated or clicking consonants, and thirty-four compound consonants.

KK is expressed by a guttural clicking; ex.: *KKin* (knoll).

LL has two sounds. In the Loucheux idiom it is palatalized and is pronounced as in the Spanish *llano*; ex.: *llen* (much). In Hare talk and in Montagnais, it is sounded as in the English *well*; ex.: *bélla* (its extremity).

MM, NN and SS present no difficulty.

TT is pronounced by pressing the tongue against the palate then releasing it abruptly while pronouncing T; ex.: *tta* (feather); *ttôρ* (nest); *ttuz* (bark).

CH is pronounced as in the French words *chant* and *chuchoter*; ex.: *chié* (mountain); *chén* (song).

TCH is pronounced as in the English *cheque*; ex.: *tcha* (big); *tchizé* (lynx).

TTCH is equivalent to TT plus CH; ex.: *ottcha* (contrarily).

DJ and DDJ are both very easy to pronounce; ex.: *djô* (big); *éddjich* (lightning).

G' equals G χ: ex.: *g'a* (hare).

ρ equals *ρ* χ; ex.: *éρ'a* (hair).

K' equals K χ; ex.: *k'a* (hare).

K*ρ*' equals K *ρ* χ; ex.: *okρ'al'* (file).

KK*ρ* equals KK *ρ*: ex.: *wokkpash* (rigorous cold).

T' equals T χ *ρ*. Pronounce *tchρ* from the back of the palate, with teeth clenched and mouth open; ex.: *t'u* (water). In front of *a*, it equals only T *ρ*; ex.: *t'a* (wave).

TT' adds to the letter T' the difficult clicking sound. It exists only in the idiom of the Hare and the Dogrib.

L' equals L χ and expresses a blowing from the palate, the tongue being folded in a corner of the mouth; ex.: *l'an* (much); *l'in* (dog).

LL' expresses the same sound combined with the Spanish LL; ex.: *ll'edh* (clay). This letter is peculiar to the Loucheux.

The letters TL, DL, KL are self-explanatory. In TL' and KL' they take on the additional hushing sound of χ.

'KL equals the (clicking) KK digraph combined with L.

DZ and TS require no explanation.

In TTS the T is very hard and sibilant.

SH expresses the English fricative TH, as in *to think*, or the Spanish C; ex.: *sha* (marten). Pronounce *sa* with tongue held between the teeth. The Hareskin substitute for it is FW; ex.: *fwa* (marten), and the "Mountain people" use instead the sound PF, as in *pha* (marten).

DH is pronounced like the English soft TH, as in *thither*; ex.: *édha* (mouth). Pronounce *éza* with tongue between the teeth. Among the Hareskin this letter is replaced by W: ex.: *éwa* (mouth): and among the "Mountain people" by V, as in *éva* (mouth).

TH equals T SH; ex.: *then* (star). Among the Hareskins this letter is replaced by *kfw* ex.: *kfwén*, (flesh): instead of it the Mountain people use the sound *pfu*: ex.: *pfüen* (flesh). The Loucheux sometimes substitute TDH: ex.: *tdha* (mountain).

TTH combines the (clicking) TT with the English fricative *th*: ex.: *tthay* (plate). The Hareskins use *kkw* instead: ex.: *kkwa* (plate): the Mountain people use *ppu*: ex.: *ppüa* (plate."

(14: XLVII – XLVIII)

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PART I

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE DÈNÈ-DINDJIÉ INDIANS

INTRODUCTION

"By combining the word *dènè*, which applies to the Chipewyans, the southernmost tribe, with the word *dindjié*, which describes the Loucheux, the northernmost tribe, I have included under a composite name. . . the entire and as yet little-known nation of American hyperborean Redskins." (14: XIX)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* have been variously referred to as *Athapascans*, *Chipewyans*, *North Montagnais* and *Tinnèh*. Those names are improper and inaccurate. *Athpascan* is a name invented by voyageur Hale to describe the Indians of Lake Athabaska; *Chipewyan* or rather *Tchippeweyanawok* (pointed-skins) is the name by which that group is known to the Cree; it applies to the moose or caribou skin tunics pointed in the front and in the back, which were worn by all those Indians and are still the Loucheux garment. The name *Montagnais* applied to those Indians by the *Canadiens* would more properly apply to those who live in the valleys of the Rockies. As for the word *Tinnèh*, it is related to the suffix *ottiné* appended to the distinctive names of the different tribes. It means inhabitants, dwellers, peasants, people in the widest acceptation of the word." (74:823)

1. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

1.1 Territory

"I apply the composite name *Dènè-dindjié* to a large family of American Redskins who live on both slopes of the Rockies and in the plains below, south to north between the latitude 54° N and the Arctic Ocean, and east to west between Hudson Bay and the Cascade range, along the Pacific coast. The *Dènè-dindjié* therefore cooupy more than half of the British northwest territory, three quarters of British Columbia and of the American territory of Alaska."

Nomenclature of the *dènè-dindjié* tribes, between the Arctic Ocean and southern Saskatchewan, classified by oblique and quasi-parallel sections, from N.N.W. to S.S.E.

1° *Danè*, men, popularly called the *Ingaliks*.

In Alaska, between Bering Sea and *Koyoukouk*:
1° *Koyoukouk-Kouttànoe*, people of the *Koyoukouk* River.

Between *Koyoukouk* and *Noukloukayet*:
2° *Ounhann-Kouttànoe*, distant people.
3° *Youkponi-Kouttànoe*, people of the Yukon River.

Between the Yukon and Takaïtsky Mountains, left shore:
4° *Kkpayou-Kouttànoe*, the Willow or Birch people. (W.H. Dall)

2° *Dindjié*, men, commonly called the Loucheux. They are Mackenzie's Quarrellers and Richardson's Kuttchin.

Between *Noukloukayet* and the junction of the two upper branches of the Yukon River:
1° *Tpa-nànae-Kouttchin*, the Mound people

Ibidem, right shore:
2° *Tpè-ttchié-dhidié-Kouttchin*, dwellers of the back country, people living far from the water.

Around Fort Yukon:
3° *Kouschâ-Kouttchin*, the Giant people, or from the Yukon; also called *Na-kotchpô-tschig-Kouttchin*, dwellers on the River with the giant shores.

At the junction of Black River (rivière Noire):
4° *Tpion-Kouttchin*, Water people or *Tpendjidheyttset-Kouttchin*, Midway people.

Along the lower Porcupine River:
5° *Rhânae-Kouttchin*, people of the Swift Current River

2. Women of the *Etcha-Ottinè* or Slave tribe

Ibidem, upstream:
6° *Vânae-ta-Kouttchin*, the Lakes people or *Zjén-ta-Kouttchin*, the Muskrats people.

In the Rocky Mountains:
7° *Tdha-Kouttchin*, people of the Mountains, or *Nattsae-Kouttchin*, the Marmots people, or *Klô-ven-Kouttchin*, dwellers on the edge of the Prairies or *Dakkadhae*, the Squint-eyed.

Along the Peel River:
8° *Tpè-tliet-Kouttchin*, people of the Water's end.

Along the lower Mackenzie:
9° *Na-kotchpô-ondjig-Kouttchin*, dwellers on the River with the giant shores.

Between the Mackenzie and the lower Anderson:
10° *Kwitcha-Kouttchin*, people of the Steppes, or *Kodhelhén-Kouttchin* people at the edge of the Eskimo barren grounds.

3° *Dounié*, men, pop. Montagnais. In the Rocky Mountains, below latitude 66° N.:

1° *Ehta-Gottinè*, people in the air, people of the Mountain.

Ibidem, at Fort Norman, left shore:
2° *Klô-kkè-Gottinè*, dwellers on the Prairies.

Ibidem, right shore:
3° *Kkpay-lon-Gottinè*, people of Willow Lake (lac aux Saules)

4° *Danè*, men

In the Rocky Mountains, towards the Rock-that-soaks-in-the-Water:
4° *Nahan-'nè*, people of the West, *Nahannès*. Small group from a large tribe living west of the central range.

5° *Espa-tpa-Ottinè*, people of the Bighorns, Bad People.

Ibidem, towards the rise of Liard and Peace Rivers
6° *Thè-kka-'nè*, mountain dwellers. Sekani (Sécanais). Part of a larger western tribe.

Along Peace River:
7° *Tsa-'ttinè*, dwellers among the Beavers, Beaver.

In the Rocky Mountains, towards the rise of Bow River (rivière des Arcs) (Alberta):
8° *Tsô-Ottinè*, dwellers among the Beavers, Sarcees, Prairie Beavers; the *Sa-arciv*, "not good" or what the Blackfoot call "Bad People".

I omit here all the western *dènè* tribes, with whom I have had no contacts, such as the Carriers, the Babine, the Atnans, the Shushway, the Hualpai and others.

5° *Dènè*, men; pop. *Hare Indians*

From Eskimo territory to Lake Simpson, along the Anderson River:
1° *NNè-lla-Gottinè*, people at the edge-of-the-world, or *Tpa-pa-Gottinè*, Ocean people, Old people of the Sea, Bastard-Loucheux.

Among the large lakes of the interior, east of the Mackenzie:
2° *Kha-tchô-Gottinè*, dwellers among the Hare, dwellers of the back country, or *Natlè-tpa-Gottinè*, dwellers among the little caribou.

Along the lower Mackenzie, north of Fort Good Hope:
3° *Tchin-tpa-gottinè*, people of the Woods, or *Kha-tpa-gottinè*, Hair people, dwellers among the rabbits.

Ibidem, south of Fort Good Hope:
4° *Kfwè-tpa-Gottinè*, people of the mountains.

North and West of Great Bear Lake:
5° *Èta-tchô-Gottinè* people from Great Cape (Grosse-Pointe) Hair people.

Along the Great Bear Lake Watershed:
6° *Nni-Gottinè*, the moss people

6° *Dènè*, men; pop. Slaves

Along the upper Mackenzie:
1° *Des-nèdhè-yapè-l'Ottinè*, people of the Great River below or *Tpi-kka-Gottinè*, people on the water.

At the junction of Liard River:
2° *Elè-idlin-Gottinè*, people of the fork.

Along Liard River and in the interior:
3° *Ettchèri-diè-Gottinè*, people of the rapids.

Between Liard River and Sharing land, along Black, Beaver, Willow and Mackenzie Rivers:
4° *Ètcha-Ottinè*, Sheltered people

7° *Dounè*, men; pop. Dogribs

Around the south shores of Great Bear Lake:
1° *Ttsè-pottinè*, people of the bark canoes, Lake people

South-east of Great Bear Lake and at the source of the Coppermine River:
2° *Tpa-kfwèlè-pottinè*, Water-anus people, people of the back country.

Around lake La Martre and along the La Martre River:
3° *Tsan-tpié-pottinè*, people of the Excrement Lake.

Along the north bay of Great Slave Lake:
4° *Klin-tchanpè*, Dogribs, Flat Sides of Dogs proper.

8° *Dènè*, men, pop. *Chipewyan*.

On the northern coast and in the eastern bays of Great Slave Lake:
1° *Tpa-'Ilsan-Ottinè*, Water-scum people, Copper Indians or Copper and what the English writers call the Red Knives.

Along Buffalo River (rivière aux Buffles):
2° *Edjiérè-tpou-kkè-Nadè*, the Ox people

Along the Slave River:
3° *Des-nèdhè-Kkè-nadè*, people of the Great River, Chipewyan.

On the south shores of Lake Athabasca:
4° *Yèta-Ottinè*, people in the air, or *Kkpay-tpèlè-Ottinè*, people of the willow floor, Chipewyan.

Between Lake Athabasca and Lake Caribou, also between those two big lakes and Hudson Bay:
5° *Ethen-eltèli*, Caribou-eaters, or *Thè-yè-Ottinè*, people of the Stone fort (Fort-de-pierre).

From Portage la Loche to the North Saskatchewan River:
6° *Thi-lan-Ottinè*, dwellers at the foot of the head; i.e. of the Great glacier.

(2:360-363)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* who live in the North-west territory are divided into tribes that belong to one of four groups: the Montagnais, the Montagnards, the Slaves and the Loucheux.

This division into groups is purely conventional. . . being based only on language. The following is a list of the *Dènè-dindjié* tribes, arranged in geographically 'ascending' order, i.e. from south to north. The Montagnais group includes:

1° The Chipewyan proper: *Thi-lan-ottinè* (people or inhabitants of the top of the head); they live on the shores of Lakes Ile-à-la-Crosse, Froid and du Coeur.

2° The *Athapaskans*: *Kkpest'aylè kkè ottinè* (people or inhabitants of aspen wood floors); they hunt around Lake Athabaska and along Slave River.

3° The Caribou-eaters or *Ethen-ekdèli*, who live east of the great Lakes Athabaska and Caribou, on the barren grounds that extend to Hudson Bay.

3. Yellowknife Indians

4° The Yellowknife, the Copper Indians described by Franklin: *T'atsan ottiné* Copper people, who live on the plains east and north-east of Great Slave Lake.

The Montagnard group, or Rocky Mountain *Dènè* includes:

1° The Beaver, *Tsa-ttiné* (dwellers among the beavers), together with

2° The Sarcee, who have separated from the Beaver. The Beaver hunt along Peace River; the Sarcee along the upper-Saskatchewan River, hard by the Rockies.

3° The Sekani, *Thè-kka-nè* (dwellers on the rocks), most of whom live near the Fraser river trading posts; only very few venture as far as the upper Peace and Liard Rivers, where they have become noted for their savagery.

4° The *Na'annès* (people of the west) or Richardson's *nok'hannè*. There again, only a small nucleus remains on the eastern slopes of the mountains.

5° The Bad People or *Etlêha-ottiné* (those who behave perversely). Very little is known about these Indians who frequent the chain of mountain peaks in the vicinity of old fort Halkeit. Richardson calls them the *Dteka-ta-uttiné*.

6° Finally, we have the *Esba-t'a-ottiné* or dwellers among the argali.[1] They are Franklin's sheep people and Richardson's *Amba-ta-ut'tiné*. They live in the high mountains between the Strong Current (Courant-Fort) and Nahanni Rivers.

In the group of Slave Indians, I include:

1° The *Etchpè-ottiné* (those who live sheltered). These are called the *Tsilla-ta-ut'tiné* by Richardson, and the *Strong-bows* by Franklin. They hunt along the Liard River.

2° The Slave Indians proper, who may be subdivided into the people of Hay River, Trout Lake, Horn Mountain, the Mackenzie Delta and Fort Norman. The name 'Slave' has been given to them by their southern neighbours, the Cree, because of their timorousness.

3° The *Plats-côtés-de-chien*, "Flat sides of dogs" or Dogribs: *L'in-t-chanpè*. They live east of the Mackenzie, between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, up to the banks of the Coppermine River. They may be subdivided into two clans: the *Dogrib* of Fort Rae (*T'akfwel-ottiné*) and the *Ttsé-ottiné*. The English call them *Dogrib*.

4° The Hare Indians, whose habitat is the lower Mackenzie area from Fort Norman to the Arctic Ocean. They comprise five tribes, the *Nni-ottiné* or "moss people", who live along the Great Bear Lake watershed; the *K'a-t'a-gottiné* (dwellers among the hares) along the river; the *K'a-tcho-gottiné* (dwellers among the large hares), who

(1) A species of wild sheep found in the Rockies (aploura Montana).

hunt in the interior, between the Mackenzie and the Arctic Ocean: the *Sa-tchô t'u gottiné* (people of Great Bear Lake) whose name indicates their habitat; and finally, the Bastard-Loucheux or *Nné-la-gottiné* (people at the edge of the world), nearest neighbours to the Eskimos in the northern part of the continent. The 'Peaux de Lièvre' are the ones called Hare Indians by the English explorers and *Ka-cho-'dtinné* by Richardson.

5° The *Eta-gottiné* or "mountain people". They live in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, between the *Esba-t'a-ottiné* and the Loucheux. Richardson calls them the *Dahà-dtinné*.

To the Loucheux or *Dindjié* groups belong thirteen tribes which are spread from the Anderson River in the east to Alaska and the Pacific coast to where, as in the Mackenzie area, they are surrounded by Eskimo.

Those thirteen tribes are:

1° the *Kwitcha-Kuttchin* or "people of the steppes" of the Arctic Ocean, between the Anderson and the Mackenzie;

2° the *Nakotchpò-ondjig Kuttchin*, or people of the river with the high banks, Mackenzie;

3° the *T'étllet-Kuttchin* or Peel River people;

4° the *Dakkadhè*, (squinters) also called the *Tdha-kké-Kuttchin* (mountain race), and the *Klo-vèn-Kuttchin* (people at the edge of the prairies), who live in the Rocky Mountains between the Mackenzie River and Alaska;

5° the *Vaen* or *Zjen Kuttchin* (people of the lakes or of the rats), whose territory is the Porcupine River area;

6° the *Han-Kuttchin* (river people) same territory;

7° the *Artez-Kuttchin*;

8° the *Kutchià-Kuttchin* (giant people) who live along the upper Yukon;

9° the *Tchandjaeri Kuttchia*, who hunt along the Black River;

10° the people of the hills or *Tanan Kuttchin* (people of the mountains), along the Tanana River;

11° the *T'éttchié-dhidié*, or people sitting in the water;

12° the *Intsi-Dindjitch*, or men of iron, and lastly

13° the *Tsoes-tsièg Kuttchin* who live along the lower Yukon.

(14:XIX-XX)

4. Dogrib Indians

1.2 Trail-blazing

"... when an Indian first passes anywhere, a few notches cut in the bark of trees, an occasional broken twig or sticks planted in the snow, are so many ways of enabling him to retrace his steps if snow has covered up his tracks."
(111:376)

2. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

2.1 Anthroposcopic description

"... I shall merely attempt to sketch the general type of *dènè-dindjié* Indian... The *Dènè-Dindjié's* head is elongated, pointed at the chin, high-domed at the top. It is widest at the cheekbones. The forehead is fairly high, but receding, conical, depressed at the temples, with a rounded protuberance at the top. The arch of the eyebrows is well-defined but, set very high and is quite prominent. The eyes are large, dark, ardent and sparkle with a distinctly ophidian glint. The upper eyelid is heavy, somewhat slanted... The nose is generally aquiline when seen in profile, but broad and slightly flattened on frontal view; the nasal aperture is quite flared especially among the Loucheux, whose noses are also more prominent and more hooked. This is partly due to their custom of wearing swan-bones and other ornaments in a perforation of the nasal septum. Their mouth is wide, set with small, closely serrated and lustrously enamelled teeth. The upper lip overhangs the lower one and curls up slightly, especially among the mountain dwellers, whose features recall those of a bird of prey. The chin is pointed, undershot in some cases, overshot in others. Additional characteristics are... ebony black hair, coarse, shiny, worn short by the women as well as by the men, and hanging in long strands over the eyes and shoulders. Their complexion is very varied, even among members of the same tribe. However, even those with the fairest skin never have the mat, rosy white complexion of the European; their skin always has a swarthy tinge to it and appears to be quite thick although it is smooth, fine textured and hairless. Their flesh is not soft and flabby, like that of the European, but firm, hard and taut... The *Dènè-dindjié* are generally tall and well proportioned; they are full-chested and never show any tendency to obesity."
(14:XX-XXI)

"The Montagnais or *Dènè-dindjié* is tall... averaging five feet eight to five feet ten inches in height. However, the children develop only slowly until they are fifteen or sixteen years old... The Montagnais might be described as follows: his head is long, pointed at the base and high-domed at the top; his hair is black, flat, long, hard and shiny, parted at the forehead and falling in long locks on the shoulder. Although fairly high, the forehead is receding, conical and depressed at the temples. The eyes

5. Hareskin family winter travelling

are brown, slightly narrow. . . the eyelids big and heavy, the cheek-bones prominent and the chins pointed. It is by the nose and the mouth that the different nations of this family can be distinguished: the southern Montagnais have an aquiline nose, with a flat area in the middle; the Yellowknife and the Loucheux have, what is generally called a sheep's nose. As for the Slave, their nose consists of little more than open nostrils. All those Indians have a wide, gaping mouth and fleshy lips. . . the foot and the hand are small and well formed; the legs, thin and bandied. The northern Montagnais are swarthier than those of the south."
(59: 489-490)

"Those Indians are tall men. Men six feet tall are not rare. . . They have prominent cheek bones, a depressed, elongated head; and a very pointed chin."
(105:369)

3. DEMOGRAPHY

3.1 Composition of population

". . . 780 to 800 Indians, at least, died from measles. . . in less than six weeks, on a population of about 5 to 6,000 people inhabiting the Mackenzie River district."

3.2 Diseases

"Before the coming of Europeans, they knew no other diseases than rheumatism, conjunctivitis and deafness."
(14:XXI)

"Measles is fatal to Indians who catch it because, as soon as the rash breaks out, they take off their clothes, expose themselves to cold air and roll naked in the snow."
(126:184)

"Measles or scarlet fever. . . that disease which came up with the boats of the Red River Company, wrought and still works great havoc among our redskin populations. . ."
(126:183)

". . . influenza which since the winter of 1864, works great havoc among the Indians."
(119:476)

3.3 Disabilities

". . . no hunchbacks or cripples are found among them."
(59:488)

4. COMMUNICATION

Petitot's chief contribution in the field of linguistics is characterized by the writing of his Dictionary of the *Dènè-dindjié* tongue (dictionnaire de la langue *Dènè-dindjié*). We shall first consider the aims, and the sources of this work, then the circumstances under which it was undertaken, adding a few remarks on the short grammar that forms part of the dictionary.

In his foreword, the author sets out the characteristics of the *Dènè-dindjié* language, and gives examples of its similarity to other living languages. He comes to the conclusion that the *dènè-dindjié* originated in Asia and that the American variety derives largely from that source. At the end of this chapter, we shall include a few notes on Indian graphic designs.

4.1 French-dènè-dindjié Dictionary

At the same time as he put out his French-Eskimo Vocabulary (*Vocabulaire français-esquimau*), Petitot published his *Dictionnaire de la langue Dènè-dindjié*, a dictionary of the *Dènè-dindjié* language, of Montagnais or Chipewyan, Hareskin and Loucheux, dialects, also including a great many words peculiar to seven other dialects of the same language. His dictionary also comprises a grammar and synoptic tables of conjugations.

In the preface to his work, Petitot sums up the aims, and sources of his dictionary together with the circumstances leading to its publication.

> "In gathering and in classifying alphabetically the words of several dialects of the. . . tongue spoken by the *Dènè* and *dindjié* tribes, my sole purpose was to acquire promptly and systematically the idiom spoken by the people I was called upon to evangelize.
>
> Long before my superiors suggested that I publish my handwritten notes, my colleagues in the North-West had gladly transcribed them for their own use.
>
> But if the Oblate missionaries in Mackenzie and Saskatchewan areas thus kindly held my work in such regard, I must also record here that, with their consent, I have incorporated their linguistic data, after duly adapting them to the method I had devised.
>
> In the column of Chipewyan or Montagnais speech, will be found all the *dènè* expressions used by Bishops LaFlèche, Taché, Faraud and Grandin in

the prayer books and hymnals compiled by those first apostles of the *Dènè* nation at the beginning of our missions in the North-West. I have also included all the words contained in Rev. Father Grouard's condensed Bible stories currently being published by Mgr Faraud, apostolic vicar of Athabaska-Mackenzie.

My dictionary is also indebted to Mgr I. Clut, Bishop of Erindel, auxiliary to Mgr Faraud, and also to Rev. Father Grouard, for words used among the Montagnais of Lake Athabaska (A); to Rev. Father LeGoff for many expressions peculier to Isle-à-la-Crosse and Lake Caribou (T). Finally, I am indebted to Rev. Father Gascon for all the Montagnais words he collected in 1862 during his stay at Fort Liard.

While I pursued strictly on my own, my study of the Hareskin dialect, I must acknowledge that my kind companion and friend, Father Séguin, was first a precursor and later an associate of mine in my study of the Loucheux of *Dindjié* dialect. My departure from Good Hope had left a gap in the vocabulary of the latter dialect; that gap has recently been filled in the Alaska territory, by Mgr d'Erindel, with the help of Rev. Father A. LeCorre, who graciously sent me the manuscript of their joint compilation."
(14:VII)

Petitot then explains the plan followed in the writing of his dictionary.

"It contains the three principal dialects. The southern one, or Montagnais; the northern one or Loucheux; and the Hareskin, which can be considered as in-between the other two because it is perfectly understood by the Dogrib and the Slaves.

In addition, it contains many words peculiar to other *dènè-dindjié* dialects. Such words are followed, in parenthesis, by the name in capital letters of the respective tribes by whom they are used.

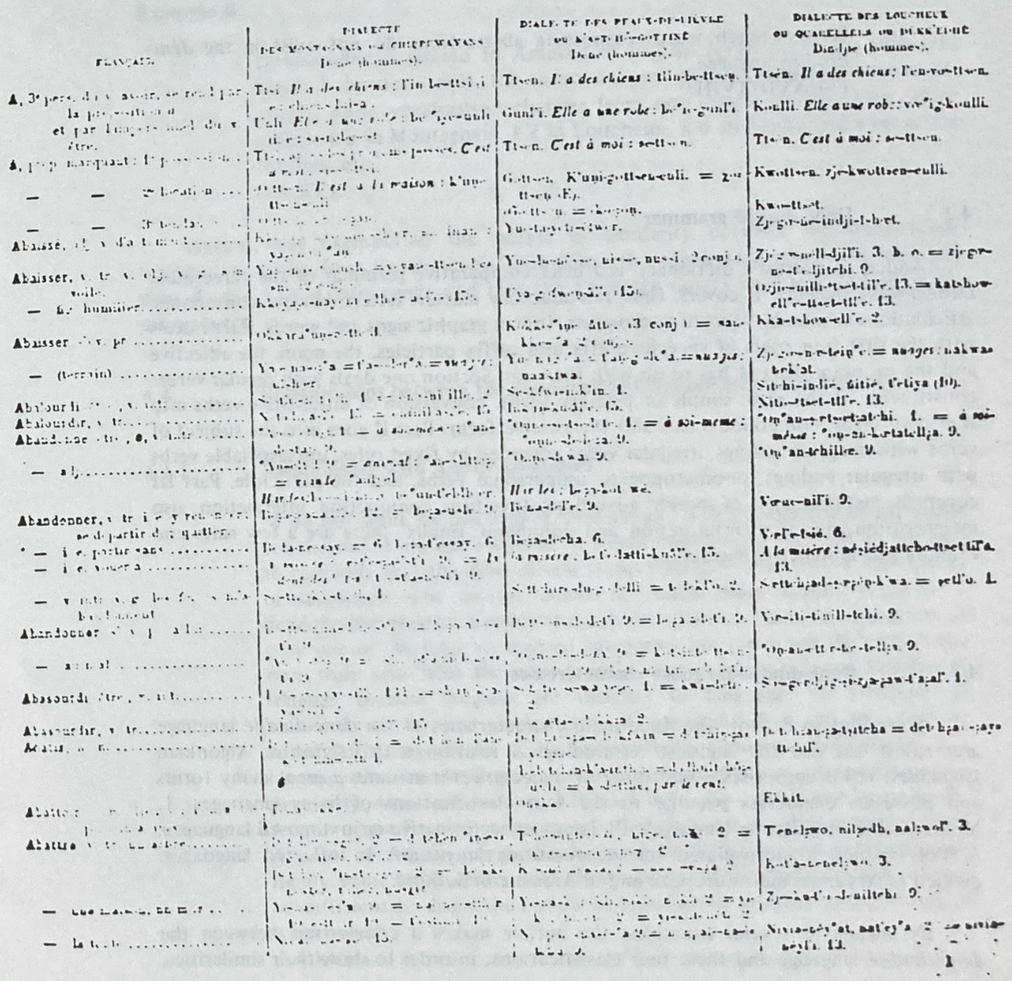
Among the various synonymous words entered opposite the French equivalent in each column, the first word listed is the most current one, the proper word. Subsequent words are also appropriate but of lesser currency. They are followed by expressions, phrases and circumlocutions used in picturesque or jocular speech.

At times, I give in italics, after certain Indian words, a literal translation of such words, even preserving inversions; I do this when the French word cannot adequately express the meaning of the Indian word, or when the latter presents in itself some pungent or novel turn of speech.

All verbs, adjectives or nouns admitting of conjugation or declension are followed, in the dictionary, by a number which refers the reader to one of the examples given in the synoptic tables of verbs.

DICTIONNAIRE
DE LA
LANGUE DÉNÉ-DINDJIÉ

A



6. Specimen page from the *Dènè-dindjié* Language Dictionary

Wherever necessary, I have supplied a few examples illustrating the use of certain words that might be misunderstood.

I never express the plural of words, for the reason that they have no plural endings.

For the same reason, genders are not shown, there being no gender in nouns or adjectives.

All nouns denoting kinship or describing any part of the human body are expressed. . . in some abstract way.

Many French words expressing abstractions do not exist in the *dènè-dindjié* language."
(14:XVII-XVIII)

4.2 Dènè-dindjié grammar

Added to Petitot's dictionary is a brief comparative grammar of the three main *Dènè-dindjié* dialects. It covers, first, introductory matter: letters, vowels, consonants, articulations or sounds, value of consonants, Indian graphic signs and words. Part I deals with the first four parts of speech: prefix and suffix particles, the noun, the adjective and the pronoun. Part II has to do with the verb. Section one deals with regular verbs: constituents of the verb, simple or primary verbs, conversion of intransitive verbs into transitive verbs, compound verbs and the passive form. Part II goes into the subject of verbs with irregular endings, irregular verbs governed by fixed rules, unclassifiable verbs with irregular endings, onomatopoeias, unipersonal verbs, and the participle. Part III covers the last four parts of speech: adverb, postposition, conjunction, interjection; also interrogation, negation, interdiction and command; finally, there are a few rules and examples of sentence construction.

4.3 Dènè-dindjié language characteristics

According to Petitot, the three main characteristics of the *dènè-dindjié* language are: (a) it has not the slightest terminological relation with Eskimo or Algonkian languages; (b) it comprises a multitude of dialects; (c) it assumes a great many forms and possesses characters peculiar to the four classifications of living languages: 1. Monosyllabic or isolating languages; 2. Turanian agglutinative or juxtaposed languages; 3. Polysynthetic, encapsulated, or incorporating languages; 4. Inflected languages, divided in Aryan or Indo-European and in Aramaic or Semitic.

By means of several examples, the author makes a comparison between the *dènè-dindjié* language and these four classifications, in order to show their similarities.

Here are two of his examples:

Example I:

"Like the Turanian languages, *dènè-dindjié* has many words formed without any connection, by agglutination, preserving their respective individuality, for instance from *t'a* (water or wave) and *er* (smoke), we get *t'a-lléré* (smoke-water) i.e. fog."
(14:XIV)

Example II:

Dènè-dindjié is related to Aramaic or Semitic languages in the following ways: 1. In root words, the consonants are prefixed and characterize the idiom, while vocalization changes from one dialect to the other. Hare, rabbit: *k'a* in Montagnais, *k'è* in Loucheux, *k'o* in Alaska and west of the Rockies, etc."
(14:XV)

Having thus exemplified the points of similarity between the *dènè-dindjié* language and the four linguistic classifications, the missionary concludes that the *dènè-dindjié* is of Asiatic origin and that the American variety derives largely from the same source.

4.4 Relationships between the dènè-dindjié language and other languages

4.4.1 Relationship with Asiatic languages

"I do not want, in this regard, to draw any overly restrictive or particular conclusions. I am not a scholar; it would therefore be too rash on my part to conclude that the *dènè-dindjié* stems primarily from this or that family of languages. The matter could be much more readily resolved if *dènè-dindjié* presented solely the definite and homogeneous characters of only one of the large recognized categories; but this is not the case. It has been truly said "that the same families of men speak the same families of tongues because tongues are varieties of language, an attribute of mankind, just as men are varieties of mankind." If it can therefore be adduced that by reason of its polysynthetic elements, *dènè-dindjié* is a language that has developed in America, in as much as encapsulation is a peculiarly American process, I think I have also established its primarily Asiatic origin because it has many other elements peculiar to languages of Asia or of Asiatic origin. Such therefore is the general conclusion we finally come to. It agrees with the teachings of the Bible and will, I hope, be sufficient to dispel the erroneous belief in the absolute autochthony of Americans."
(14:XVII)

4.4.2 Relationships with the languages of America

"It being established that one or two large families of North American Indians immigrated to America by way of Asia, we have only to look for linguistic affinities between those families and other Indians living more to the south to establish clearly that the American variety is largely of Asiatic origin. Well, I have had the occasion, in 1865, to ascertain such affinities between the *dènè-dindjié* language and that of the *Apache* nation, a tribe of the *Nabajo*, when I read a book, published in the United States, entitled: "*New-Mexico and its people*, by W.W.H. Davis, attorney, New-York, 1857." I found there fragments of Indians vocabularies collected by Spanish missionnaries, cited by the author, and from which I borrowed the following *nabajo* terms. After comparison it seems to me that their language is identical with the *dènè-dindjié*, and constitutes merely a different dialect, with the addition of certain words unknown to the *Dènè* and which probably stem from the *Nabajo* mixing with the redskin tribes with which they are associated. If I dared venture an opinion, I would go as far as to say the *Nabajos* and the *Tanos*, of which nation they form a part, are just as foreign to the rest of the *Apache*, the *Piros*, the *Tégwas* and the *Kwères*, and also the *Zuni* and the *Moqui*, as the *Sarcee*, another *dènè* tribe of upper Saskatchewan, are foreign to the Blackfoot nation, among which they live and which has adopted them. The *Nabajo* of New Mexico and the *Sarcee* of the western prairies, who constitute the link between the latter and the *Dènè* and *Dindjié* nation, are therefore probably the forerunners, the pathfinders of that large

Table 1

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE NABAJO WITH THE DÈNÈ AND THE DINDJIÉ

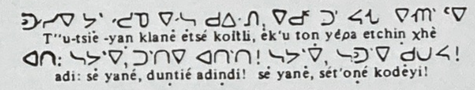
	Nabajo	*Dènè (from various dialects)*	*Dindjié*
Five	*ichla*	*la-kkè.* = *inl'a* (a hand)	*inl'adl gwenlle.*
Dog	*kli*	*kli.* = *l'en.* = *tl'in*	*l'én.*
Horse	*kli-cha*	*kli-tchô.* = *l'intchôp*	*l'én-tchpô.*
Grass	*klôs*	*klô* = *tlô*	*klô.*

Source: Dictionnaire de la langue Dène-dindjié: XVII

family's trek to the south. But who knows whether the nations of Mexico and Peru do not likewise have a strong affinity with our *Dènè* and our *Dindjié* since several ethnologists have considered the *Nabajos* as *Aztecs* or as Mexicans? In fact when I recently had an opportunity in Nancy, to chat with a learned linguist from Lima, don G. Pacheco Zegarra, who has scholarly knowledge of *Quichoa*, language of the Incas, we were both amazed to find that the *quichoa* and the *dènè-dindjié* have exactly the same very complicated alphabet, having as many as 60 to 65 sounds requiring an equal number of phonetic signs. The double letters, the clicking, guttural, palatal and dental sounds are so completely similar that we remain convinced that the relationship between those two languages could not be limited to those features. I regretted my inability to discuss the subject with that scholar long enough for us to ascertain the existence of still other correlations."
(14:XVII)

Table 2

EXAMPLE OF DÈNÈ HANDWRITING FROM A HARESKIN FABLE



As the black loon's son was groaning on the shore,
His mother, in singing it to sleep said:
My son, you are crying out in vain!
My son, for my soul is unfeeling!

4.5 Indian graphic signs

Western Indians having no handwriting, the pioneer Oblate missionaries adapted to the Montagnais dialects the monosyllabic conventional characters devised by Evans, missionary among the Maskegon Indians of Lake Winnipeg. But Petitot considers this device inadequate because it does not fully answer the requirements of the *dènè-dindjié* idiom which has no less than 71 phonetic sounds. For this reason, it is difficult to apply.

MATERIAL CULTURE

5. WEAPONS

5.1 Raw materials

"The weapons used by the *Dènè* and the *Dindjié*, at the time Europeans came to this country, barely a century ago, were made of wood, of bone and of stone. Copper and iron were unknown to them. . . Even at the present time, stone is still the material most in use, together with metal."
(58:530)

". . . no object made of bronze or of copper is ever found among the *Dènè-dindjié*."
(58:531)

"Stone weapons. . . are made of silex, petrosilex, phonolite ("clinkstone") and kersantite."
(14:XXXI)

5.2 Hand Weapons

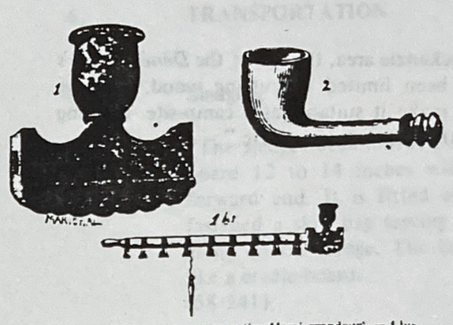
5.2.1 Knife

"The *Dènè's* crescent-shaped scraper-knives (*sun-kèzè*), were originally probably made of stone and were also used in the tanning of skins, although they more usually served to cut clothes and meats."
(58:542-543) (Pl. 7, No. 3)

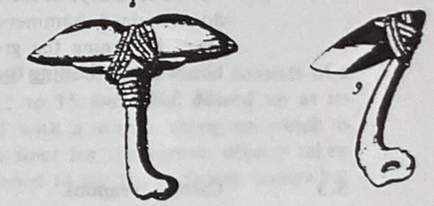
"There are frequent references in *Dènè-dindjié* stories to the teeth (*ru*) of giant beavers, said to have been used as knives."
(58:542)

"The ice-chisel (*èté*). – This instrument, of everyday use in chopping holes in the ice of lakes and rivers, so as to spread nets to catch fish or beavers, or simply to draw water, consisted originally of a ram's horn or that of musk-ox mounted at the end of a long wooden shaft. Hence its name *èté*, which means horn, although the chisel proper is now made of iron. The escoubane or large ice-skimmer (*l'urtthayé*). Indispensable adjunct to the ice-chisel: it consists of a net stretched on a wooden hoop whose tips are fastened together to a handle. It is used to clean up holes made in the ice, i.e. to remove chips left by the ice-chisel.
(58:540) (Pl.8, No. 23)
(Pl.9, No. 24)

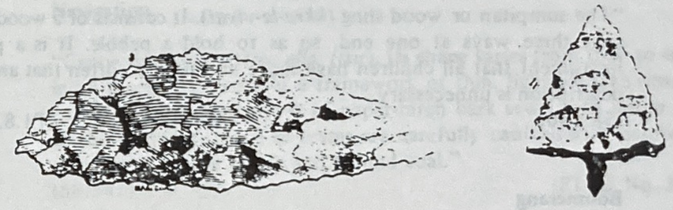
"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use. . . such as whetstones. . ."
(58:530)



DÈNÈ. — 1 et 2. Calumets en serpentine (demi-grandeur). — 1 bis. Calumet emmanché. — Dessins du R. P. Petitot (voir p. 530).



DÈNÈ. — 8. Hache dènè, danoise et tibétaine, emmanchée. — 9. Hache esquimaude, polynésienne et égyptienne, emmanchée. — Dessins du R. P. Petitot (voir p. 531).



DÈNÈ. — 3. Couteau en phonolithe (demi-grandeur). — 4. Dard de flèche en quartz. — 5. Hache en kersanton (réduite au cinquième). — 6. Lancette en phonolithe (demi-grandeur). — 7. Pierres à filets en calcaire (réduite au tiers). — Dessins du R. P. Petitot (voir p. 530).

7. *Dènè-dindjié* artifacts

5.2.2 **Axe**

"Until recently, in the lower Mackenzie area, the use of the *Dènè-dindjié's* double-edged hammer-axe has been limited to cutting wood, splitting trees, flattening the ground to make it suitable as a camp-site, mashing bones before boiling them to extract their marrow, etc."
(58:531) (Pl.7, No. 5.8)

5.3 **Casting Weapons**

5.3.1 **Sling**

"The sumpitan or wood sling (*kkra-la-yiyai*). It consists of a wooden shaft split three ways at one end, so as to hold a pebble. It is a primitive instrument that all children have made and used so often that any longer description is unnecessary."
(58:540) (Pl.8, No. 21)

5.3.2 **Boomerang**

"The boomerang (*nalzous; khètellral'*). It is a spindle-shaped piece of wood that is hurled so as to make it ricochet on the snow. Some tribes make it in the shape of a two or three-pronged reaping-hook. It flies through the air in irregular capers. Nowadays boomerang-throwing has become solely a game of skill."
(58:540) (Pl.8, No. 22, 22 bis)

5.3.3 **Harpoon**

"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use. . . such as javelin and harpoon heads. . ."
(58:530)

5.3.4 **Bow and arrows**

"The bow (*elt'in*) and the arrows. – The bow is usually made of a one-piece branch of willow. The string is of reindeer sinew. There are many kinds of arrows. The shaft is made of "amélanchier" and the head is of bone. The arrowhead is either serrated (*detlèné*), or sharp (*ètè-chel*), or blunted (*tinl'*). The names for arrows vary according to dialects. Quartz or silex (*kkratàré*) arrowheads are now very rare."
(58:540) (Pl. 7, No. 4)
(Pl. 8, No. 20)

6. **TRANSPORTATION**

6.1 **Sledging**

"The sledge (*besh-tchènè*). – Made of birch or white fir, it consists of a board 12 to 14 inches wide and 12 to 15 feet long, curved up at its forward end. It is fitted all around with a sturdy thong to which is fastened a skin bag serving as a container for the various objects taken along on the sledge. The bag is fastened to the thong railing, somewhat like a cradle-board.
(58:541) (Pl. 10, No. 34)

6.2 **Navigation**

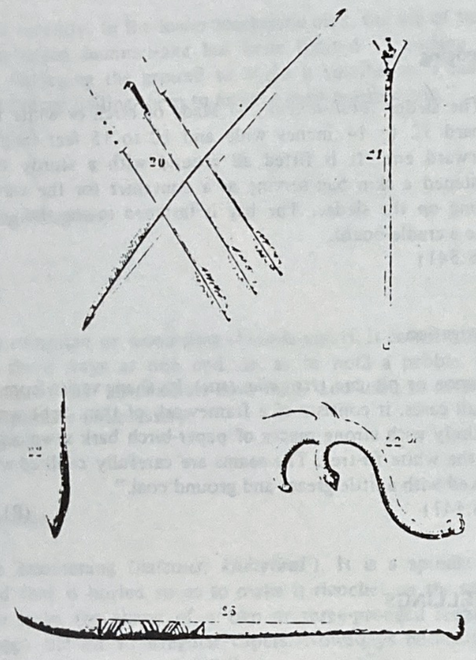
"Canoe or pirague (*ttsi; ella; ttsu*). Its shape varies from tribe to tribe, but in all cases, it consists of a framework of thin, light wooden ribs covered entirely with strong pieces of paper-birch bark sewn with *watap* or roots of the white fir-tree. The seams are carefully caulked with dissolved resin mixed with a little grease and ground coal."
(58:541) (Pl.10, No. 36 to 39)

7. **DWELLINGS**

7.1 **Tent**

"Their homes are tents or skin lodges (*nipali, naupalé, nivia, etcheyédé*) or leaf huts. . . The Montagnais, the Beaver and the Slave live three years in tents of caribou or moose skin sewn together and laid upon a conical framework of poles stuck into the ground and fastened at the top. The Hareskin and the Loucheux build spherical tents. . . In both types of tents, a thick layer of fir-tree boughs, covered with robes of reindeer, buffalo or white bear skins. . . makes up the floor, table, seats and bed. In the middle is the fireplace, from which the smoke escapes through an opening at the top of the tent. In winter, the base of those dwellings are banked up with snow, inside as well as outside, to make them warmer.
. . . those dwellings are cold in clear weather and dark at all times. For this reason the Indian will generally say: "*Sas-ansé lanttè se-kᶜnûê*" My house is like a bear-den."
(59:531)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* live in conical or dome-shaped tents of moose skins, or reindeer skins, either haired or dehaired. Those lodges are called *nanbali, nonpalé, nivia, nijyé, ètchiédé*, according to dialects. They rest on cones of lashed poles or on hoops fastened to the ground. Smoke from a fire which



8. *Dènè-dindjié* artifacts
NORTHWESTERN AMERICANS. 20. *Dènè-dindjié* bow an arrows – 21. Hareskin, sling-shot – 22. Chipewyan, boomerang – 22. bis. Hareskin and Loucheux, boomerang – 23. Ice-cutter.

is never allowed to go out escapes through a hole at the top. Certain tribes. . . are satisfied with huts of fir-boughs (*kpuni kowa*). . . a few fir boughs covered with old robes of reindeer, buffalo or moose hide, serve as the Indian's table, work shop, seat and bed. He sits in it cross-legged and sleeps in it with the rest of his family or visitors, or uninvited guests. . ."
(14:XXV)

"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use such as. . . lamps. . ."
(58:530)

"If dry wood becomes scarce. . . the Indian will set the forest on fire."
(14:XXV)

". . . Indians make fire with compact (iron) pyrites."
(14:XXXIII)

8. CLOTHING

8.1 Shoulders and hips

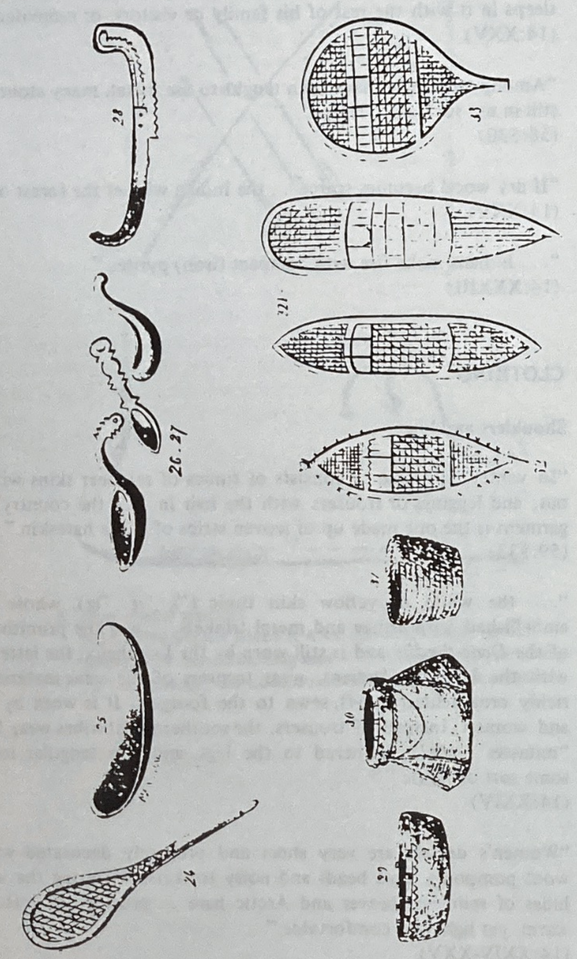
"In winter, clothing. . . consists of tunics of reindeer skins with the hair out, and leggings or trousers with the hair in. But the country's warmest garment is the one made up of woven strips of white hareskin."
(59:533)

". . . the white or yellow skin tunic (*'i, 'iè, 'ig*), whose tails were embellished with fringe and metal trinkets. . . was the primitive costume of the *Dènè-dindjié* and is still worn by the Loucheux; the latter, together with the Hareskin Indians, wear trousers of the same material, likewise richly ornamented (*kia-i*), sewn to the footgear. It is worn by both men and women. Instead of trousers, the southernmost tribes wear leggings or "mitasses" (*shel'*), gathered to the legs, and a rectangular loincloth of some sort of fabric."
(14:XXIV)

"Women's dresses are very short and profusely decorated with fringe, wool pompoms, glass beads and noisy trinkets. . . During the winter, the hides of reindeer, beaver and Arctic hare. . . provide. . . clothing that is warm, yet light and comfortable."
(14:XXIV-XXV)

8.2 The foot

"The usual footwear is the moccasin (*k'é*). . . which encloses and moulds the foot."
(14:XXV)



9. *Dènè-dindjié* artifacts

"Snowshoes (*"ay; "a; "ey*). A snowshoe consists of a frame of wood (willow, birch or fir) of varying shape according to the tribe which makes it, and is strung with a weave of slender strips called babiches. The woven openwork is strengthened by two or three crosspieces set into the frame. The user places his foot in the middle area between the crosspieces, where it is held by a thong fastened around the ankle while the tip of the foot sinks into the snow through an opening just under the toes. The forepart of the snowshoe is called the head and the back part the tail. Snowshoes are made in various sizes ranging in length from twelve inches (children's snowshoes) to six and seven feet (hunting snowshoes)."
(58:541) (Pl. 9, No. 32, 32 bis, 33)

8.3 The making of snowshoes

". . . a small object made of bone (*kuray, koka*) or of ivory, sometimes of metal, is used to braid snowshoe webbing. . . This method of braiding forms a network of hexagonal openings resulting from the superposition of diamond-shaped plaits over rectangular ones. Those netting-needles are also used in knitting strips of Arctic hareskin into seamless garments. . .
(58:543)

"Bone and stone scrapers used by the women to remove superfluous fat and flesh from hides, preparatory to tanning. . . Those instruments. . . are simply sharp-edged stones or pieces of reindeer skin-bones, level-edged and lightly serrated. . ."
(58:542)

9. ADORNMENT

9.1 Ornaments

9.1.1 Hair

"The wearing of a large tonsure. . . is also a Montagnais custom. At one time, both men and women parted their hair over their forehead and let it hang down on both sides of the face. Nowadays only the old wear their hair that way. . . The younger people model their styles on those of French Canadian half-breeds. . .
(14:XXV)

". . . on solemn occasions, after having smeared their hair with powdered red ochre mixed with melted tallow. . . the *Dènè-dindjié* sprinkle it over with the white down of aquatic birds, such as swans, geese and ducks."
(29:693)

9.2 Body Care

"At one time the *Dènè* and the *Dindjié* never washed themselves; however they would clean up their hands and face with grease or a piece of fish flesh. . . Even today, they will wear a shirt until it falls in shreds; and when they want to dress up, they will wear two or three shirts on top of the dirty one. . Their bodies are alive with vermin."
(14:XXV)

9.3 Tattooing

"Tattooing is limited. . to a few small parallel lines that the women will wear on their chin, at the corners of the mouth or on the cheek bones. The men are rarely tattooed, but they do paint their cheeks, chins, foreheads and noses with vermilion."
(14:XXV)

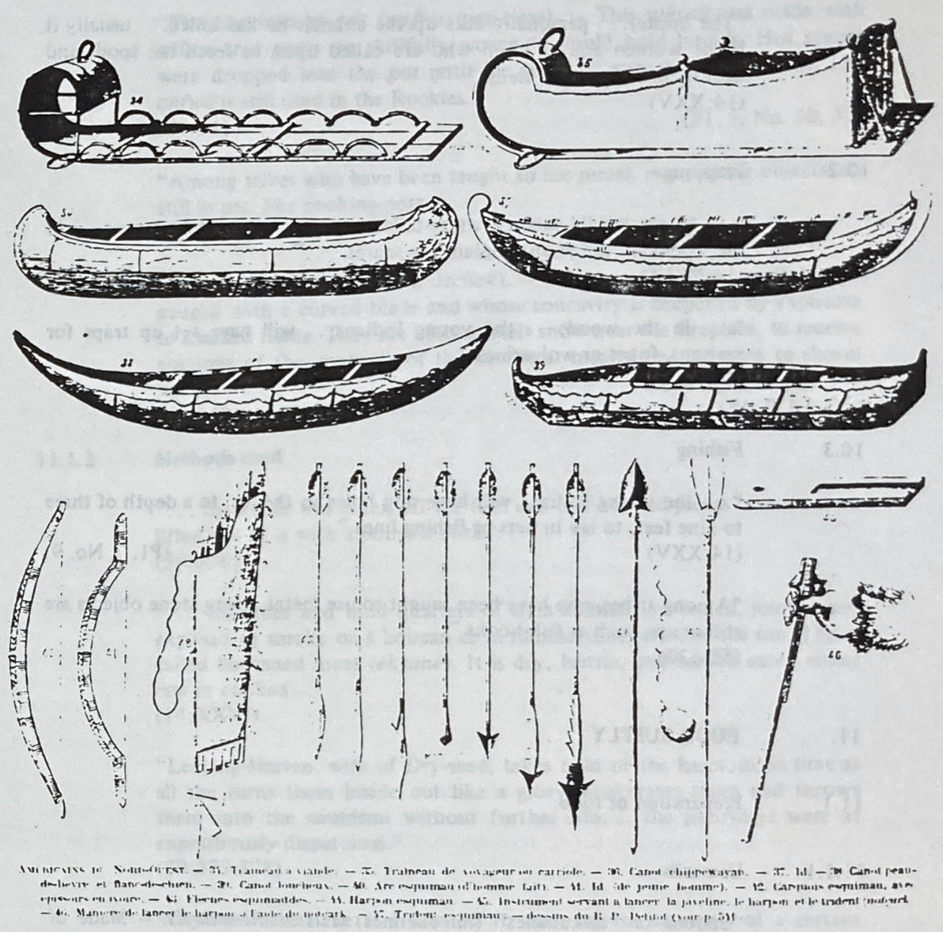
10. METHODS OF LIVELIHOOD

10.1 Hunting

"The provider Indian has set out; he is taking along his whole family, his skin tent, his clothing and his weapons; his only vehicle is a long birch board curled upward at the front, dragged directly along the ground by 2 or 3 dogs. . . He personally blazes the trail on snowshoes until he reaches a spot with a sufficient supply of dead wood and enough game tracks. There, he pitches his tent, and scouts around until he has killed a few animals. Then, it is up to his helper to dress the game and cut up the venison and stash it safely away. . ."
(111:376)

"They hunt reindeer in various ways: by pursuing it on foot, or on snowshoes, over frozen lakes, or in the woods or the prairies; or by trapping it in nooses or snares set up in large enclosed pounds into which they drive herds of this animal. In summer and fall, the *Dènè-dindjié* lie in wait for the reindeer at certain narrow stretches of water where herds are in the habit of crossing in their periodic migrations from the Arctic Ocean into the interior, and vice versa. As soon as a herd has started to swim across, it is at once surrounded and slaughtered. . . *Dènè* names for reindeer are *étié, éthen, èkfwen,* that is meat, food."
(14:XXV)

"Mountain sheep and goats are stalked, as are beaver and moose. A beaver or elk that has been allowed to escape usually remains lost to the hunter."
(14:XXV)



10. *Dènè-dindjié* sleds, boats, etc.

"The hunter. . . personally cuts up the animals he has killed. . . usually it is the women and children who are called upon to fetch the spoils and haul them to camp on sleds."
(14:XXV)

10.2 **Trapping**

". . . to catch wild rabbits, white-tailed ptarmigan or willow grouse. . . in the woods. . . the young Indians lay snares. . . ."
(14:XXVI)

". . . in the woods. . . the young Indians. . . will have set up traps for martens, foxes or wolverines."
(14:XXVI)

10.3 **Fishing**

". . . the young Indians will have dug holes in the ice, to a depth of three to nine feet, to lay in nets or fishing lines."
(14:XXV) (Pl. 7, No. 9)

"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use, such as fish-hooks."
(58:530)

11. **FOOD SUPPLY**

11.1 **Preparation of food**

11.1.1 **Ustensils**

"Spoons or "mikouanes" (micouennes) (*l'us; etchè-unliné*). – Made of wood or of the horns of musk oxen, of wild sheep or mountain goats, the spoons are frequently of very large size for they are not meant to fit into the user's mouth; they are actually only ladles or porringers. They are also used to skin the fat out of broth by a simple process. The Indians sit around the large kettle and each in turn glides the back of his large ladle along the surface of the boiling liquid and then licks off the fat. This is repeated until all the fat has been taken up. Usually, to facilitate the process, a handful of snow is thrown into the kettle, to congeal the fat."
(58:540-541) (Pl. 9, No. 26, 27)

"Punnets or receptacles of birch-bark. They are called *kkri t'ili* or *kkri tthay*, according as to whether they are shaped like a cauldron on a dish."
(58:541) (Pl. 9, No. 29)

"The cauldron or pot (*onfwa; pay-t'èni*). – This utensil was made with willow-tree roots so skillfully woven it would hold liquids. Hot stones were dropped into the pot until the contents were brought to boil. The *onfwa* is still used in the Rockies."
(58:541) (Pl. 9, No. 30, 31)

"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use, like cooking-pots.
(58:530)

"The dishes (*tthay; kkwa; ttchek*). – These are merely small boards gouged with a curved blade and whose concavity is deepened by exposure to a naked flame. They are used to melt snow near the fireplace, to receive portions of the contents of the kettles at meal time, and even to shovel snow."
(58:540) (Pl. 9, No. 25)

11.1.2 **Methods used**

". . . the kettle was taken off the fire, and half-cooked pieces of meat were lifted out of it with a pointed stick. . . ."
(59:378)

". . . the sides and hind quarters of slain animals are boned, jointed and exposed to smoke on a boucan or in summertime, dried in the sun. This is called buccaned meat (*ékpané*). It is dry, brittle, and can be eaten either raw or cooked.
(14:XXVI)

"Leaping-Marten, wife of Dry-seed, takes hold of the hares; in no time at all she turns them inside out like a glove, eviscerates them and throws them into the cauldron without further ado. . . the partridges were as expetitiously dispatched."
(59:377-378)

"Dry-seed asked me if I wanted to taste of the contents of a certain unlidded cooking pot. I was served a kind of yellowish and gummy glue. I asked him about the ingredients of this soup. Pointing to a piece of parchment that served as a door to his hut, and to a level-edged piece of moose-bone, he said: "This is what the soup is made of, and this is my cooking implement."
(59:378)

11.2 **Foodstuffs**

11.2.1 **Meats**

". . . they abhor dog-meat, and never eat it. . .".
(14:28)

"The animals which provide the *Dènè-dindjié* with food are the barren-ground reindeer, the great woodland reindeer or caribou, the moose or American elk, the bison, the musk-ox or ovibos, the argali or Rocky Mountain sheep, the bighorn or mountain sheep, the beaver and the ondatra or muskrat."
(14:XXV)

"If the Indian runs out of food entirely . . . he will have someone scrape the skins of his tent, or his wife's leather tunic, so as to get a. . . jelly-like substance called *elt'anl'-tsin.*"
(14:XXVI)

11.2.2 **Vegetables**

". . . they are fond of the young roots of the "maso" (Hedysarum alpinum), a species of wild licorice; the other favorites are roots of the yellow pond-lily, the pith of the flowering rush, the tart stems of the cow parsnip and wild rhubarb (Polygonum elliptica)."
(89:70)

"If the Indian runs out of food altogether . . . he will go out and scrape rocks, gathering a black cockled lichen of the genus Gyrophora; this cryptogam, when boiled, will provide a smooth and nourishing gelatine (*thé-tsin*, or rock tripe) to feed the children."
(14:XXVI)

11.2.3 **Beverages**

"Among the *Dènè*. . . tubes made of hollowed swan bones (*kuja; kuvuli; tsendhul*), are used by the men to drink more conveniently while traveling in a canoe; i.e. they can thus suck up water without having to go ashore.
(58:543)

11.2.4 **Euphoriants**

"Among tribes who have been taught to use metal, many stone objects are still in use, such as calumets. . ."
(58:530) (Pl. 7, No. 1, 1 bis, 2)

11.3 **Cannibalism**

". . . cannibalism took place among almost all tribes before their conversion. The pangs of hunger and inordinate fear of death drove those Indians to such a pitch of insanity that, far from thinking of setting out in

search of food, they threw themselves at one another and slew one another mercilessly. . . The Montagnais were less guilty of such excesses than the other tribes, because each family lives in isolation."
(14:XXI–XXII)

"The Montagnais nation is not and never was anthropophagous. . . however, there is hardly an old man around Great Bear Lake, Fort Good Hope and in the Rockies who has not. . . in time of famine. . . . eaten several members of his family. At Fort Norman I saw a white-haired old man who has eaten as many as eleven. . ., i.e. his two wives, and his six children, his father, his mother and a brother-in-law. Hardly three years ago (1864). . . an Indian of Fort Good Hope. . . ate his youngest daughter."
(59:530)

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

12. KINSHIP

12.1 Family

12.1.1 Marital Relationship

12.1.1.1 Choice of a mate

". . . they choose their wives only within their own tribe; they do not feel the slightest reluctance to form an alliance with a sister-in-law or a niece of theirs. On the contrary, they look upon a woman's kinship with their late spouse as a sufficient reason to remarry with her. However they have a deep aversion to unions between blood relations."
(14:XXXV)

"Usually, the woman was bartered by her father for a blanket, a gun or. . . a couple of dogs."
(14:XXIII)

12.1.1.2 Polygamy

"Bigamy, polygamy and even a state of relative communism were widespread among the *Dènè-dindjié*."
(14:XXII)

"Among the Mackenzie Indians. . . it is rare for a man to keep his first wife. . . he will change wives 3, 4, 5 or 6 times. . . before persevering in a last union. . . He will nonetheless continue to look upon all women with whom he has had sexual intercourse as a wife of his and will keep referring to her as such."
(253:2-3)

12.1.1.3 Division of work

"The wife. . . (must) attend to all housework, tan hides, dress furs, bone and smoke venison, grind bones to extract the marrow, and do the sewing, washing and mending."
(14:XXV)

12.1.1.4 Forms of dissociation

"If the woman is dissatisfied with her husband, she gets even by breaking faith with him (divorcing). The husband does likewise. . . but not without

first giving her a few blows with the butt of his gun or the flat side of his axe-head, in part settlement.
(59:528)

"When a husband had tired of his wife and rejected her, he took back any gifts he had made to her, but had no right to claim from the aggrieved father the return of whatever object had served to seal the bargain."
(14:XXIII)

12.1.2 Family behaviour

"The father's authority is not much greater. . . than that of the chief. It is hardly respected except through force."
(59:528)

". . . the child is a slave who must obey at all times, and obey everybody. . ."
(59:529)

"I was not unaware of the small amount of care bestowed by the Indians upon the orphans committed to their charge."
(111:377)

12.2 Kinship terminology

". . . if, within the tribe. . . a husband calls his wife *sé'a* (my slave), in other locations he refers to her as. . . *sé dézé* (my sister).
(14:XXII)

". . . they have no word in their vocabulary to designate male or female cousins, of whatever degree. These are all referred to as brothers or sisters. Also lacking in their vocabulary are specific words for brother and for sister in general; but they do have specific terms for special words to differentiate the elder or younger brothers. Orphans, the adoption of whom has developed into a custom, refer to their adoptive parents as father and mother. In the *dènè* tongue, the words for uncle and aunt derive from the words father and mother. They have no abstract term to designate parents in general; in such cases they use the word brother. They do have a word, however, to designate parents in the capacity of forebears or progenitors. The various forms of this word are *sé tchôp k'é, sè t'i kwi* or *sé téjyé k'é*, which mean respectively "my big ones", "my tall ones", "my higher ones".
(14:XXXV)

"1. all uncles are called "father", and all aunts "mother";
2. all grandsires and grandams, together with brothers and sisters thereof are called "grandfather" and "grandmother". Unrecognized

are such concepts as those of grand-uncle and grand-aunt, or those of great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, etc.

3. vice-versa, there are no grand-nephews, but only grand-sons;
4. there is a distinct word for eldest brother, and one also for youngest brother, but none to express the word brother. Likewise for the word sister;
5. the names cousin (male or female) are expressed by the words brother and sister, without any particular designation.
6. one and the same word designates son-in-law and daughter-in-law. Similarly there is a single word to designate brother-in-law and sister-in-law, etc.

Among the Montagnais of all nations, there is complete identity in this respect, except in a few dialects."
(59:500-501)

13. COMMUNITY

13.1 Community structure

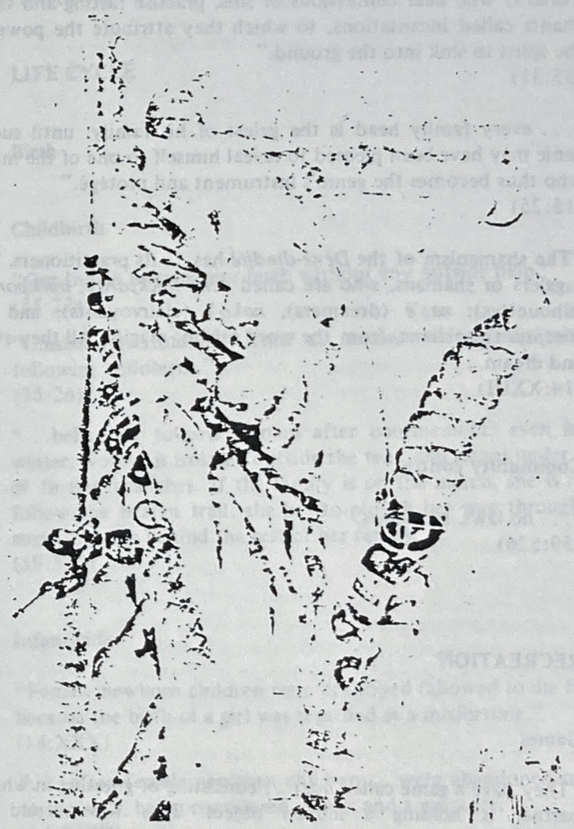
"The large Montagnais family is not constituted into a republic or in a number of small states; it is divided into tribes which are subdivided into various bands, each independent of all the others and recognizing no other master than the individual wishes of each member."
(59:526)

13.2 Chiefs

"While a few tribes have one or several chiefs, those chiefs wield but very little power and their title is largely honorary. Their functions consist in regulating hunting expeditions, discussing the advisability of trips to trading posts, parcelling out among younger members the goods obtained by trading. . . A chief is known by the length of his harangues.

Indians do not consider themselves as inferiors to their chiefs and yield to them in no respect whatever whereas the chiefs. . . in order to preserve their rank and popularity, shower largesse upon the young people whom they pompously call their retinue; *seskénéu*."
(59:526)

"The chiefs appointed by certain tribes, or rather chosen for them by the Hudson's Bay Company have absolutely no other function than that of organizing hunting and trading trips. . ."
(14:XXII)



11. Missionaires travelling on Great Slave Lake

13.3 **Priests (jugglers)**

"... those Indians recognize jugglers who assume the joint functions of conjurors, spell casters, physicians seers, thaumaturges, and finally absolvers. Men of this category are more despised than feared, because they are generally paranoiacs or half-crazy."
(15:25)

"... by way of priests they have jugglers that they call Clairvoyants (*Nako'i*) who hear confessions of sins, practise fasting and the singing of chants called incantations, to which they attribute the power of causing the spirit to sink into the ground."
(35:31)

"... every family head is the priest of his family, until such time as a genie may have been pleased to reveal himself to one of the man's children who thus becomes the genie's instrument and protégé."
(15:25)

"The shamanism of the *Dènè-dindjié* has... its practitioners. They are the jugglers or shamans, who are called *dènè inkkpanzè, inkkponé* (shadows, silhouettes); *nat'é* (dreamers), *nako'i* (clairvoyants); and in *dindjié, toezjien* (magicians, from the word *schian*: magic). All they ever do is sing and dream..."
(14:XXIII)

13.4 **Community control**

"... no laws, no judges."
(59:526)

14. **RECREATION**

14.1 **Games**

"They have a game called *udzi*... consisting of guessing in which hand the partner is holding a hidden object. This was carried on to the accompaniment of songs, outcries and drumbeats."
(14:XXX)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* would frequently wear masks... while playing games imitating the actions of giants called *otchapé, kfwi-dételli* (shaved heads), *dzé-tchpô* (great hearts) or *tchi-tchpô* (big heads)..."
(14:XXVI)

14.2 **Songs**

"Their songs, simply vocalized among the Montagnais, accompanied by words among the Hare and the Loucheux, are not devoid of harmony and of rhythm. They have a rhythm for love, another for war and magic, a third for games, a fourth for dancing and a fifth for mourning and sorrow... all those songs are in a minor key... As soon as we stop accompanying them, either vocally or with some instrument, they flatten all the notes..."
(14:XXVI)

15. **LIFE CYCLE**

15.1 **Birth**

15.1.1 **Childbirth**

"Our Indian women give birth without any outside help."
(35:27)

"(husbands) abstained from all sexual relationship with their wives following childbirth."
(35:26)

"...behaviour toward women after confinement: even in the dead of winter, woman is isolated outside the tent, and sleeps under a small shelter of fir-tree branches. If the family is on the march, she is not allowed to follow the beaten trail; she has to plough her way through the snow, at some distance behind the rest of her family."
(59:515)

15.1.2 **Infanticide**

"Female newborn children were destroyed (allowed to die from exposure) because the birth of a girl was regarded as a misfortune."
(14:XXX)

"... often female newborn children... were abandoned or left as a prey to the wolf, being considered useless and a nuisance."
(14:XXIII)

15.1.3 **Infant feeding**

"Mothers... breast-feed their children during three years or more."
(35:26)

15.1.4 **Naming**

"... instead of the sons taking the name of their parents, it is the father and the mother who, at the birth of their first son, assume the newborn's name. Thus, the father of *Ttchélé* is thenceforth known as *Ttchélé-t'a* (father of *Ttchélé*), and his mother as *Ttchélé-mon* (mother of *Ttchélé*)."
(14:XXX)

15.1.5 **Transporting babies**

"Our Indian women carry their babies on their backs."
(35:27)

15.1.6 **Bethrothal**

"... among certain small tribes along the Mackenzie, some children are betrothed at a very early age..."
(253:3)

15.2 **Adolescence**

15.2.1 **Menstruation**

"... during their menses, wives and daughters are segregated from all others... they are not allowed inside the family tent.. they are even excluded from the camp itself...; throughout the menstrual period, they live in a small hut made of branches, their head and chest covered with a large hood, so they cannot see any man or be seen by one. They must neither follow or cross any trails, nor ride in a pirogue, nor sit on the bed skins, nor use any cooking utensil; they are made to drink through a slender tube made of a swan bone. While in her menses, the woman is called *tei-ttini*, an ambiguous word which means: she who wears a hood, and also she who is in ailment. According to the Indians, the reason for this practice is that this condition in a woman can cause a man's death."
(35:26)

15.3 **Old age**

15.3.1 **Behaviour toward the aged**

"... not so long ago, an old woman in her eighties, and in her second childhood, was abandonned, during the summer, on a small island of

Great Slave Lake, with no other food than a single piece of dried meat."
(59:494)

"... the fate of the old people... ill treatment, harsh words, mockeries, deprival of food, wishes of death... If death tarries too long, or if the old person becomes crippled and disabled... he or she is abandoned on a campsite until death follows. At Good Hope, an old man was abandoned by his children... and a woman in her seventies by her only son. A small fire is built for him in the snow; a piece of smoked meat is left near him, under a shelter of branches, and the tribe moves on! As of that moment he is considered dead. As his relatives say: *Otcié élla-niwèt, yènta ahentté khulu otcié ellaniwet*. – "He is indeed dead; he still looks alive, but in fact he is dead."
(59:528-529)

15.3.2 **Burial**

"As regards funeral customs, there are three methods of burial: the body is either stretched out, crouched up or stood up and placed in a pit, or in a casket of rough wood held up on stakes, on or in the ground, in tree trunks, planted in the ground, etc. Cremation is also practised, for the purpose, says Petitot, of providing comfortable warmth to the dead, whose body would otherwise shiver forevermore."
(Bordier: 61) (Pl. 13)

"... they would bury their dead as soon as death occurred... They would sew up the body in skins which they painted in red, then deposited it in its grave... entombed it upright in the hollowed trunk of a standing tree..."
(14:XXXIII)

"... the dead are removed to some secluded spot and deposited in a chest made of slender notched tree trunks, raised three to seven feet above the ground. The dead Indian's clothing, weapons and utensils are buried with him; his birch-bark canoe is laid upside down over his grave, or else allowed to be carried away downstream. All of his personal belongings that cannot be buried with him are destroyed. They are burned, thrown into the river, or hung up in the trees, for they are *eln'ari, étay*, i.e. anathema."
(14:XXVI)

"The *Dènè-dindjié*... bury their dead in chests (*tssa*) raised on piles driven into the ground. Since they embraced Christianity, they have turned to ground burial... surrounding the grave with coarse fencing or a staked enclosure."
(58:589)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* have never practised cremation or incineration as a national custom."
(58:602)

"They feel an extreme repugnance to handling dead bodies or bones of the dead, and they never use any object that has belonged to a dead person. As soon as anyone is in the throes of death, they hasten to put down the tent, to avoid death taking place in it, which would make it taboo."
(14:XXXV)

RELIGION AND WORLD OUTLOOK

16. RELIGIOUS LIFE

16.1 Religious beliefs

"The beliefs of the *Dènè-dindjié* are implicitly reflected in their traditions, their legends and their daily practices. They do not teach them professedly. Nor do they officially recognize their beliefs or their divinities."
(15:44-45)

16.1.1 Spirits and deities

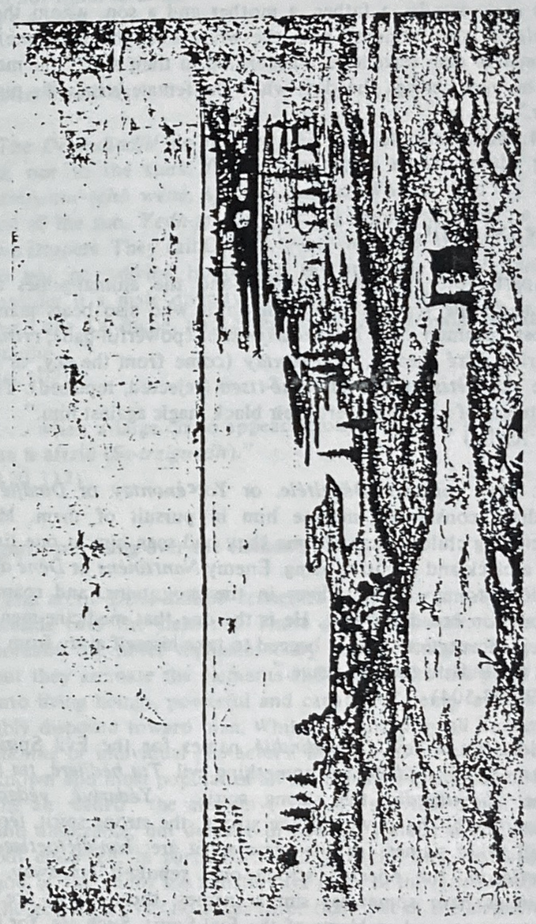
16.1.1.1 National god

"The moon, *tpèwè-zaë* or *adzié-di-sa*, the midnight sun, is for the *Dènè-dindjié* nation the real national and tutelary god, supremely recognized and worshiped."
(15:112-113)

"As a child, the moon-god is the provider of the *Dènè-dindjié*. He is called *Sié-zjit-dhidié, Sa-kkè-wéta Sa-wéta;* i.e. Sitting in the moon, sitting on the moon or He who lives in the moon. He is also called *Ettsen-noulé-yan*, the Little Beloved, *Bettsin-nni-ounli* and *Bettsen-nouli*, the Creator. . . Other names for him are *Etsièghè*, the Musk-ox-dung; *Nni ottsintâné*, Moss child; *Bètsouné-yénel chian*, Raised by his grandmother; *Oumit-chimo-awasis*, the Dung child, and finally *Attik-oumik iyiniw*, the Man of the reindeer excrement. As magician or protector of the *Dènè-dindjié*, the Moon-god bears the names of *Kotsi-da-tpèh* or *Oltsint-pédh*, the Operating stick, because he worked wonders with the aid of his wand; he is also named *Etsié*, the Grandfather, and *Etsiédéwkfoë*, the yellow Grandfather. . . . Finally, as genie or god of the moon, this divinity changes the preceding names into those of *Oboe-ékon* or Shield-belly, *Edzéè, Edzil'* or *Adzjell*, the Heart, and *Ettsonné, Ettsun, Ettséné*, the Evil spirit."
(15:116-119)

"The male lunar god is all the more the arctic *Dènè-dindjié's* national god for his being their maternal grandfather. Those Indians claim they issued from the marriage of a direct descendant of the first man and woman with a daughter of old man Moon, named *Yékkpay-ttsèghe* or daylight's wife."
(15:117)

". . . our *Dènè-dindjié* have a primordial knowledge of a good Being who is placed above all other beings. He has a multitude of names. The most usual one in the three main dialects is *Bèttsen-nu-unli* (he by whom the earth exists), *Nnutsé* (earth-maker or Creator) and *Tit'ié* (father of men). The Hareskin and the Loucheux consider him a triad made up of the



12. Great Bear Lake, Keith Bay (westshore). Fort Norman and Petitot Mission.

father, the mother and the son. The father is sitting at the zenith, the mother at the nadir, and the son travels up and down the sky from one to the other."
(14:XXIII)

"Frequently they personify their divine triad in the form of huge birds of the eagle family, a father, a mother and a son, whom they call *olbalé, orelpalé* (the immense one, the white one, the pure one), *nontèlé* and *Kanédèté* (the traveller). . . according to their story, the male, on arriving at his nest, brings the day, while the female brings the night along with her."
(14:XXXI)

16.1.1.2 **The Evil Spirit**

"Apart from the creative triad and the animal-genies or *Elloné*, the *Dènè-dindjié* recognize an Evil Spirit who also bears many names. The most common ones are *yédariyé-slini* (powerful-bad); *éttsoné* (otter, evil spirit); *ëdzé* (heart); *yat'énontay* (come from the sky, or having crossed the sky); *éttséni* (spirit); *onné-ttsen* (rejected, repulsed). The Indians live in terror of him and exert their black magic against him."
14:XXIII)

". . . evil spirit or *Dèneltélè*, or *Yatᶜènontay* or *Dindjié ta"in*. . . The Indians constantly imagine him in pursuit of them. Many of them, including children assured me they had seen him at one time in the guise of a black and frightful being. Enemy *Nanttinène* or *Dènè djyèdè* does not belong to any nation, lives in the mountains, and roams through the woods in broad daylight. He is the one that medicine-men turn away by their incantations. He is begged to take himself away from the sick and to let the Indians hunt in peace."
(59:503-504)

"Here are a few *Dènè-dindjié* names for the Evil Spirit: *Ttasin-slini, ttasin-djiéré, djidzjin*, i.e. something evil. *Tta bédjiéré, tta beslini*, the evil one; *djen-tloedh*, the strong spirit. . . *Yédariyé, yédaodiyé, yéindji-dhaetloedh*, the powerful, the strong, the strong spirit, *iéeé* the evil one. Still other names for the same spirit are: *han-djétoetlaedh, hantpoetè-toetlaedh*, the rejected strong one, repulsed far away. Since certain animals have somewhat similar names, those beasts are considered as instruments and emblems of the Evil Spirit. Such are, for instance, *ttsen, ttséné, éttsali*, the yellow woodpecker (Picus varius) and *éttsun, éttson, ttsiw*, the otter. Yet *Ettséné* is not a tempter nor a torturer. . . . He is not a trine and is regarded as a pure spirit; i.e. he is disembodied. The Indians dread this demon mainly with regard to their breaches of the ancient customs of their forebears. But the sole punishment they have seemed to me to dread from *Ettséné* is death. The habitat of that evil Spirit is the

Moon. Finally the *Dènè-dindjié* give the evil spirit an even more mysterious and equivoqual name by calling him *Edzil', Edzéè, Edzon, Adzjiel'* i.e. the Heart of heaven or of nature. Under this designation he is still the genie of disease and of death, at the same time as a lunar divinity. However, I cannot asseverate that he is the same god as *Ettséné*; indeed I do not think so at all."
(15:82-85)

16.1.1.3 **Astral divinities**

"The *Dènè-dindjié* do not pay any kind of worship to the sun, *sa, cha, sié*, nor to the stars, *fwen; shen*. Their name for the planet Venus is *Ttsèyunnè-tchô wènè*, star of the Tall Woman, and for Syrius, *sa-linhé*, dog of the sun. *Yedh-ta*, the celestial virgins, is the name they give to the two Dippers. They call Orion's belt *Dénintchié*, the old man. . . While they do not pay divine honors to the sun, the *Dènè-dindjié* nevertheless consider it a male divinity among the *Tchippewyans* of Lake Athabasca and Lake La Biche, and a female divinity among the Hareskins and the *Dindjié*. . ."
(15:102)

". . . when a large circle appears around the sun, the Montagnais say the sun is afraid (*Sa-trelguedh*)."
(120:337)

16.1.1.4 **Spirits presiding over the elements**

"The arctic *Dènè-dindjié* recognize spirits or genies called *Schédim* who preside over the elements. Those gods of the air, of fire, of the aurora borealis, are never represented by definite images. They are truly spirits but they animate the elements and meteors to the point of turning them into living beings, powerful and capable of being favourably or unfavourably disposed toward man. While recognized by all Indians, they are never *éllonhé* or individual protectors, in the eyes of the *Dènè-dindjié*. The best known and most popular of all the *Schédim* is the god of the winds and of the air, called "the almighty." He is a spiritual being, therefore invisible and unseizable, but delicate of hearing, jealous and quick to take offence but endowed, in particular, with powerful and indefatigable lungs. The god of the winds has a distinctive name in the *Dènè-dindjié* theogony; but the god of fire has no other name than that of the element itself: *kpon;* he is, however, a beneficent god, extremely beloved by all who live in the coldest country on earth."
(15:76)

"*Idi* or *Iti*, the god of lightning, and in a wider sense, the god of thunder, is even more dreaded than *Ta-youkpay*, the polar fire. He is produced by a gigantic eagle. Each spring, with the return of warm weather, he promptly

shows up on the peaks of the Rockies where he nests, and comes down again to earth in the fall. *Idi* produces lightning by winking his eyelids, and thunder by the violent quaking of his wings and his tail."
(15:79)

16.1.1.5 **Legendary divinities**

"The most northerly *Dènè-dindjié* virtually recognize divine ommiscience in the names of a legendary hero variously called *El-naki, El-na-guhini, El-ta-oduhini, El-na-ta-ettini* or *nischié-gunihiw,* according to particular dialects, and meaning: He who sees backward and forward, He who has eyes in front and in the back. They visualize this god as being of gigantic stature, in whose comparison man is but a puny pigmy. They attribute to him the utmost benevolence, see him clad in dazzling finery and holding in his hands thunder and also a celt or stone axe with which he can split open the earth to release man held captive there by the Spirit of darkness."
(15:54-55)

"Wrapped up in the skin of the son (of fabulous birds, i.e. of white eagles), *Ra-tronné* or the Stranger, hero of the *Dènè*, crosses the Ocean and lands in America, avoiding the dark country of the Dog-Men, after two stopovers on islands of the Pacific."
(29:696)

16.1.1.6 **Goblins**

"Lastly the arctic *Dènè-dindjié* also have goblins, which they call *kfwi-tta*, meaning War feathers; of which they could not give me a description but which they recognize as being perfectly harmless.
(15:100)

16.1.2 **Eschatology**

16.1.2.1 **Immortality of the soul**

"The *Dènè-dindjié* believe in the immortality of the soul, in a second life, in a world above and a nether world."
(14:XXXI)

"Of the immortality of the soul, they have rudimentary knowledge; their separated souls are the *Eyoūnè* to some, and the *Ewiū-èn, Ttsini,* and *nikyon,* to others."
(59:505)

"The ghosts or *Eyunné* of our *Dènè* whistle like the *Innulit* of the Eskimos."
(13:XXXIII)

"Our *Dènè-dindjié* believe that souls depart in a boat. In fact a standard phrase to express a dying man's last moments is: *bé yu dék'i* (his spirit is leaving in a canoe)."
(58:601)

16.1.2.2 **Behaviour of departed souls**

"... some Indians believe the northern lights are the spirits of kinsmen performing celestial dances; and when they get too afraid of them, they dispel them or pretend to dispel them by shooting off guns in the air; on the other hand they imagine they can summon them by whistling; others pay no attention at all to them."
(120:338)

16.1.2.3 **Reincarnation of the soul**

"... a great many tribes, the pristine belief in metempsychosis and the transmigration of souls is profoundly rooted. Usually, it is babies who are born with one or two teeth who are considered as resuscitated or reincarnated. Likewise babies, born just after someone's death. I was unable to shake a young girl's belief that before she was born, she had lived in a body and with a name other than those under which I knew her; nor could I prevent an old woman from claiming as her own the child of her neighbour, under the specious pretext that she recognized in him the transmigrated soul of her own dead son."
(14:XXX)

"The fact that some children are born with two teeth is considered by northern Indians as a case of transmigration and reincarnation of the soul of the last person to die within the tribe."
(75:246)

"This faculty of reincanation, the *Dènè-dindjié* apply it also to animals. I have known an unfortunate mother who was heartbroken, because a professional witch assured her she had seen her dead son walking along the lake shore, in the shape of a bear. It is rare that after some notable Indian has died, companions of his do not come forward and declare that they have seen him, changed into a two-legged caribou, a bear or an elk."
(14:XXX)

16.1.3 Moral concepts

16.1.3.1 Evil

"... they know about snakes, including very big ones that they call *naduwi, natéwéri, klan,* and *it'ini*. In their minds, snakes are so identified with evil, disease and death that when they wish to describe a fit of shivering or an acute attack of some infectious or nervous disease, they use the phrase: *natéwédi yé nadenkkwé*, "the snake has got into him." They claim that in their incantations, their medicine men or seers would force these reptiles to leave the body of the sick who applied to them for help."
(14:XXXV)

"... they recognize sin of (which they equate essentially with sexual intercourse) as the prime source of all evils, and death as its punishment: this is what is expressed by the saying: *Etendi-koëdenyé*."
(35:31)

16.1.4 Sacred objects

"... as soon as they have gone through their initiation, the Indians secure a pelt or some organ of the animal to be used in making an amulet, a talisman. ... Bird claws, tails or wings; pelts of ermine weasel or skunk; birds stuffed or with outspread wings. These were worn on the person. They were also used to decorate pirogues, cradles and beds; spouses would sleep under the gaze of the tutelar animals that symbolize the devil, such as the wolverine, the otter and the fox. This amulet was planted on food caches, to the accompaniment of chants."
(15:8-9)

"... the feathers of the yellow woodpecker (Picus varius) and the pelt of the otter are powerful amulets."
(15:84)

16.2 Religious practices

16.2.1 Taboos

"When Indians while hunting have killed a large animal, such as an elk or a reindeer, they collect its blood in the animal's paunch and bury it under snow, far from the meat. When they kill a bird or a small animal, they bleed it at once."
(35:29)

"...before they were baptized, they considered it a fault to eat the flesh of a still-born animal or one found dead; in this fashion they differentiated between animals that they regarded as pure and edible, and unclean ones, such as ferocious beasts and carnivorous birds."
(35:30)

"...the Indian must avoid eating blood, shell-fish, fish spawn, still-born animals, intestines, lice and certain animals and birds...crows, dogs, or animals that have died from some disease."
(59:514-515)

16.2.2 Magic

16.2.2.1 Curative

"...*èlkkézin-tsédjen, ehkkèen-tsèt chin, nikkion-tsoetil'ié*, or healing magic, according to the different dialects or "the song of one upon the other", mutual song, also bears the strange and mysterious name of "underwater passage", *tpu-yié-tsédété*. In order to operate healing magic, the only one in which the *Dènè* shamans play the twin role of absolver and healer, the conjuror, sometimes accompanied by two fellow magicians, would shut himself up with the patient in a *chouns* or medicine-lodge and, it is said, abstained from all food during three days. He would lie down beside the patient and launch into chants, suspirations and insufflations that were said to be beneficial and capable of charming away the malady. He would thus very easily manage to put the patient to sleep through the soporific effect of this monotonous and unmelodious recitative.

Prior to this ritual, the conjuror would obtain from the patient a confession of his faults; because, claim the *Dènè*, it is the sins of men that draw upon them evils, diseases, and cause them to die: *étendi koédenyé*. It seems that this auricular confession was a genuine one on the part of the patient. On the part of the absolver, however, it was a rather odious procedure, for I have been told that conjurors were not content with a spontaneous avowal of the patient's transgressions and did not take the patient's word but attempted to take advantage of his ingenuousness by means of captious or useless questions, and make him confess to greater misdeeds than those he had committed. When the confession was over and the patient had been lulled to sleep by the chants, the magician would summon *You-hanzin*, "the Distant one", or *Nou-hansin* "He who is far from us", and call upon him to attend. The Hareskin call him *Younkfwin*, "Spirit of the North." Rushing up in response to the shaman's call, the Distant Spirit cast out the patient's sins, pulled out the disease or pain or malicious spirit that beset him, retrieved his soul which had hidden and was trying to leave his body and, reinstating it within its corruptible shell, restored life to the dying man, who was thus saved. But if the Distant

Spirit had too great a love for the dying person's soul, he would spirit it away and that was the end of it. The man would die. . . All this was a lucrative business, for it had to be paid for, and not at all cheaply."
(15:25-28)

16.2.2.2 **Inquisitive**

"Inquisitive magic, *nanlyéli, nanldé, yné-inkpa tsédékpa, yunkpat-adeytchit,* was the cast spell, the beneficial spell. Its purpose was to recover lost people or objects, to forecast the arrival of traders' boats, the outcome of hunting trips and travels, and to get information about the condition, dwelling or actions of absent people. The minister of this procedure was called *nàkohin,* the seer. . . For the purpose of knowing the future, the seer chants, blows, squirms and wriggles, quavers in nasal tones, and ends up by pretending to fall asleep. On his simulated awakening, he describes to his dupes the visions he has had in his pretended trance. He then makes a show of throwing up in the air a tiny ball, which he adroitly palms out of sight and has supposedly gone out to fetch news of the person, or information regarding the object about which he is being consulted. Finally, still chanting, he sees the ball suddenly reappear, bringing him the desired information."
(15:28-32)

16.2.2.3 **Harmless**

"In the harmless or fun magic, *yétitséwi,* jugglery, *yéïndji-djitpèzjit,* repetition of thought, the *Dènè-dindjié* seem to copy, by way of sport, the actions of one of their old-time heroes wielding a white stick or a slender branch of willow, and with horns tied to his forehead, the prestidigitator performs tricks or amusing stunts. He runs all over the camp wearing no other clothes than an animal skin; he wears a mask, or smears his face with vermilion, or with the juice of bilberry or of bearberry; his sole purpose is to arouse laughter, to play tricks on lookers-on, chasing after girls and boys, striking with his stick at those who are not quick enough to move out of range, and he himself scampers away amid the jeers and clamor of the crowd."
(15:32-35)

16.2.2.4 **Procurative**

"The Indian name for procurative magic is *inkkpanzé tta nattsoet,* "the strong shadow"; *ékhé ta-yétlin,* "the child (or young man) tied up in the air"; *akpey,* the child or the young man. Its purpose is to provide the shaman or his tribe with a large quantity of venison animals, either by attracting them to the territory, or by slaughtering them if they are already within range. The aim, therefore, is to put an end to or procure

abundance. . . this wonderful objective can be achieved only by the death of as many enemies as they need animals prepared to be slaughtered and eaten up. . .

Although the name and the description of this mode of jugglery refer to a young man, in practice the shaman makes use of a little child; in fact the words *sé-kwi, eskpé, ékhé,* and *akpey* mean child as well as boy and young man in the *dènè-dindjié* language. So, the shaman takes a little child, puts him in a hammock, ties him with eight strands around the head and a like number around the feet, then rocks him in the medicine-lodge to the chant of death to his enemies."
(15:35-38)

16.2.2.5 **Maleficent**

"Malefic or harmful magic, called *inkkpanzé dènè-kkèolté,* "the shadow that kills"; *èétlé,* "the dance"; *Ya-tpèh-nonttay* or *yitpoenétik,* "He who has crossed the sky in his flight, the fallen, the Devil. This type of magic is designed to visit death upon a personal enemy and is rooted in the shaman's own feeling of hatred or a family's desire for vengeance. Practitioners of this type of magic incur extreme disrepute and are held in fear as well as contempt. To play the devil, the *dènè* shaman removes all his clothes, smears his face with vermilion or red ochre, has someone paint red stripes all over his body, wears horns on his forehead, ties a wolf or wolverine tail below his back, and holds in his hands fringes of porcupine hair. Those fringes, *ékfwèli,* he alternatively rolls and unrolls them around his limbs. . . walks, shakes, quivers, and waddles along, in anger, *nànékel,* on his hands and feet, like an animal. In doing so, he imitates an animal as the best way to get close to the malicious-spirit. In this state, the shaman chants, calls, swears, howls. . . working himself increasingly into a frenzy and befuddling himself by dint of noise, contortions and howlings. He invokes *Ya-tpèh-nonttay,* calls on him to wing his way speedily from Great Trouts Lake, his customary abode, and penetrate into his body so that he may possess it and obey him by giving him all the means required to cause the death of his enemy."
(15:39-43)

16.2.3 **Ritual**

"When, in the winter, extreme cold plagues them and imperils their lives, the arctic *Dènè-dindjié* speak to the fire and say: *χuri, kpon nézin, χuri dinkpon, pélè-yékpo, patponnè wètlu.* "Quick, good fire, quick, perk up! Lo the wolf is approaching apace, and the traveller is numb with cold." This invocation has to be repeated until the fire blazes up."
(15:77)

16.2.4 Devotion toward the Dead

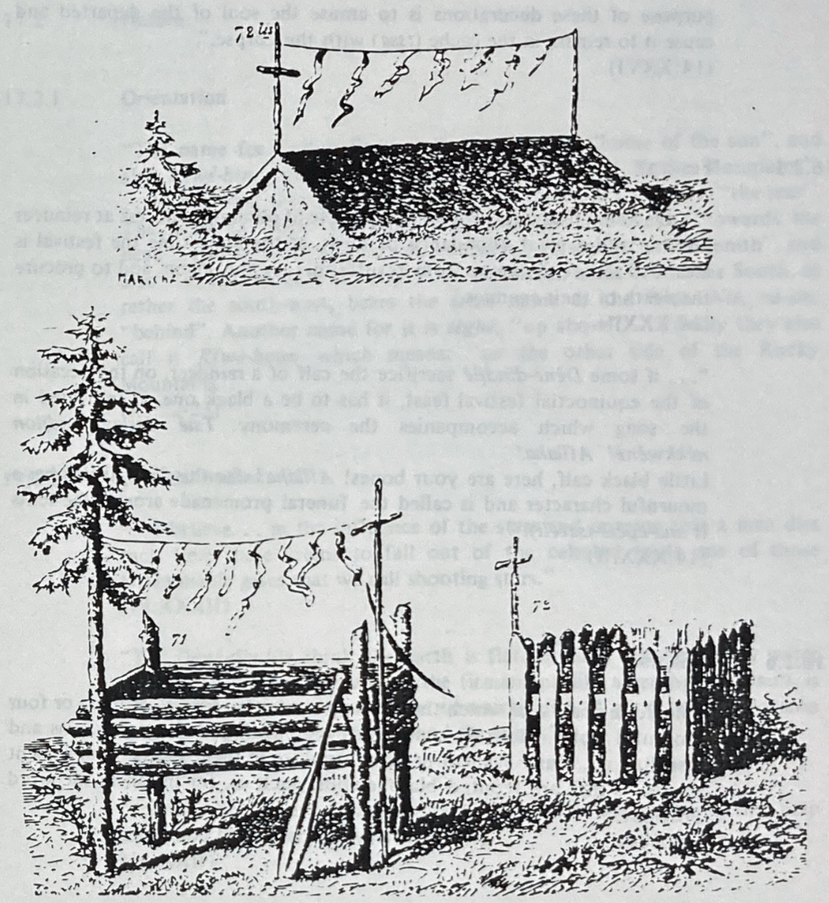
"When their parents die, the *Dènè-dindjié* express their mourning and their grief by cutting off their hair, rolling in the dust, tearing their garments and even shedding them altogether. At one time, on such occasions, they would make incisions in their own flesh and go about entirely naked."
(14:XXX-XXXI)

"The use of masks was frequent among the *Dènè-dindjié*; at funerals masks were used on the face of the dead."
(14:XXVI)

"Among certain tribes, one year after someone's death, all would gather around the hiding-place, and the grave was opened so that all may have a last look at the hideous and decomposed remains of the body; then, after laments and the singing of the hymn to the dead, the tribe would feast silently on the grass. I have witnessed this practice again at Great Bear Lake and among the Dogrib far removed from the trading posts."
(14:XXVI)

"Commemoration of the dead and feast of the souls. . . Our christian Indians now omit the first and the last act of that scene, i.e. 1. the visit and the stripping of the graves; 2. the procession of the bodies and translation of the relics. In the first case, a crowd of tribesmen would gather at the cemetery on the day appointed by the chiefs. This usually took place in the spring, i.e. after the souls had allegedly returned to the burial ground of their mortal remains. Sometimes, those ceremonies were held in the fall, i.e. before the periodic departure of souls with migrating game birds. At the cemetery, the graves were laid open and all present silently contemplated the macabre contents. Then, after the tribute of tears had been paid, the bones were carefully cleaned, stripped of any remnants of putrefied flesh, wrapped up in fresh skins, and then processionally paraded through the tents, where they were subsequently deposited in a place of honor, receiving each day the homage and offerings of the occupants. That religious ceremony was followed by panegyrics to the dead, the silent feast and the dance of the dead, during which a distribution of presents took place. Finally came the third part of the feast. The bones, reduced to a compact volume, were processionally transferred to a common grave, where they were covered first with branches and then with earth, but in such a way that the earth would not come in contact with the relics. However, the bodies of those who had been dead less than a year did not share these honors, undoubtedly because the condition of their corpse did not permit of this ritual."
(58:590-591)

"Above the graves of their dead, the *Dènè-dindjié* suspend long poles to which varicolored streamers of different colors are attached. The secret



13. *Dènè* graves

purpose of these decorations is to amuse the soul of the departed and cause it to remain in the cache (*tssa*) with the corpse."
(14:XXVI)

16.2.5 **Festivals**

"...the moon festival is held for the purpose of obtaining success at reindeer hunting and a great abundance of meat; at the same time the festival is meant to relieve the moon from its sufferings, as they claim, and to procure the death of their enemies."
(14:XXXII)

"... if some *Dènè-dindjié* sacrifice the calf of a reindeer, on the occasion of the equinoctial festival feast, it has to be a black one, as indicated in the song which accompanies the ceremony: *Tsié dètley endjion nèkkwénè! Aïllaha!*
Little black calf, here are your bones! *Aïllaha!* for this festival also has a mournful character and is called the funeral promenade around the tents (*t'ana-épéié-tsatéli*)."
(14:XXXIII)

16.2.6 **Chants**

"Medicine chants, of which there is a great variety, consist of three or four mournful notes endlessly repeated, accompanied with contortions and insufflations. Many shaman healers introduce in their chants some ancient words... that are reputed blasphemous, such as, for instance, the word Sosᶜlouz."
(59:507)

17. WORLD OUTLOOK

17.1 Self-image

"The proper name of the Indians we are talking about here is man, which is translated without any indication of the number involved by the words *dènè, tènè, danè, dunè, dinè, adènè, adaena, dnaïnè, dindjié dindjitch,* according to tribes and dialects. Those words mean "what is earth, earthling, or terrestrial, from the particle *dè*, meaning "what is" and the radical *nnè, nni, noen, nan,* "earth."

17.2 Nature

17.2.1 Orientation

"The name for East is *Sa-yissi,* "sun-home" or "home of the sun", and also *Kfwè-hin,* "mountains-behind" or "behind the Rocky Mountains". ...to the West they give the names *Tasin, tahan, tan, tien,* i.e. "the rear". The name of North or rather the north-east is *Thinsin,* "towards the head", also *Inkfwin, younkfwin, youthen,* "at large", "at the zenith", and also: "in the reindeer country", "in the barren lands." "... the South, or rather the south-west, bears the same name as the West: *Nié, na-sin,* "behind". Another name for it is *téghé,* "up above"... Finally they also call it *Kfwè-houn* which means: "on the other side of the Rocky Mountains."
(87:22-23)

17.2.2 Celestial bodies

"... believe... in the influence of the stars and imagine that a man dies each time there seems to fall out of the celestial vault one of those inflammable gases that we call shooting stars."
(14:XXXII)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* think the earth is flat, circular, surrounded by water and resting on that element... the firmament, like a hemispheric vault, is said to rest on the edges of the terrestrial disk. A prop called *ya-ottcha ni''ay* is said to support the sky and the earth."
(14:XXXII)

"... their vocabulary includes the names of a few constellations that help them find their bearings when travelling."
(14:XXII)

"... it was a little duck called *rankanli* who made the earth."
(105:370)

17.2.3 Atmospheric phenomena

"According to the *Dènè-dindjié*, lightning is produced by the flashing glitter in the eyes of a kind of monstrous eagle called *idi, iti,* whose flapping wings cause the rumbling of thunder."
(14:XXX)

"As for the celestial fire or polar light, the aurora borealis, those same *Dènè-dindjié* call it *éthen-kponé,* "reindeer-fire". They assume that the northern lights are made up of myriads of electric sparks escaping from

the fur of the celestial white reindeers, when these animals, pursued by spirits, rush and rub against one another as they head back towards some other point in space. But the *Dènè-dindjié* of the far north look upon northern lights as groups of celestial spirits, *ttsintèwi*, virtuous souls of their ancestors, performing up in the sky fantastic rounds and farandoles; or else manifestations of the presence of *Edzéè*, "Heart of the sky" or Genie of death. They claim that the aurora borealis scintillates vividly and unfolds across the sky in fast and sinuous movements, unbalances the head of lagging travellers and even strikes them down as would lightning. The *Dènè-dindjié* fear the aurora borealis and when, in travelling, they are surprised by one of those very vivacious displays of northern lights, they invoke the aurora and immediately make to it a confession of their faults in order, as they say, to abate the wrath of *Edzéè*, the avenging spirit. This has been an ancient custom among the *Dènè-dindjié*, and they observe it not only with regard to polar light, but in relation to any object that affects their mind of strikes terror into their imagination.
(15:77-78)

"... when there is an eclipse of the moon or of the sun... the *Dènè-dindjié* think that the celestial body is suffering and is on the verge of weakening in a confrontation with the Genie of death."
(29:692)

17.3 Numbers and measures

17.3.1 Numeration

"The hand is their standard of calculation, and shows the extent of its limitation. Once they have counted on the five fingers of one hand, they start again on the other, until they have covered the ten fingers."
(14:XXII)

17.3.2 Time

"Their measure of time does not exceed the lapse of one year. They recognize a great number of seasons, which they characterize by the different conditions of snow or soil, and they divide the year into twelve months or moons, each with a distinctive name. Several bear the names of animals, such as eagle, frog, goose, etc."
(14:XXII)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* count the days from sunset to sunset, for they say... that night preceded the day."
(14:XXII)

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

18. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

18.1 Dènè-dindjié Indians and Eskimos

18.1.1 Social

"The *Dènè* and the *Dindjié* have developed feelings of violent hatred and of even greater terror towards the Eskimo, who have massacred entire hamlets of these Indians. Accordingly, they apply to the Eskimo the injurious epithets of Enemy-feet *Ennak'è, anakpen* and Enemies of the open country: *Ot'el-nna.*"
(13:XI)

18.2 Dènè-dindjié Indians and Kolloches (Tlingit)

18.2.1 Social

"At that time, the enemies of the *Dènè* were the Kolloches, who live west of the Rocky Mountains. . . but today there is no trace of any dissension between red-skin nations."
(15:37)

"The *Dènè-dindjié* admit having had contacts with the *Khaguon* Kolloches in the respective roles of slaves and conquerors."
(58:603)

18.3 Dènè-dindjié Indians and Whites

18.3.1 Cultural

"Banlay (*Béla-nih-orlay*) "for him the earth is made", such is the name given to the French by the Montagnais. The names *Manannlay, Banè-gaunlay, Bètikorllay, Bètikollè* given to Frenchmen by the various Montagnais tribes all mean the same thing."
(59:493)

18.3.2 Social

"The Whites exert unlimited sway over our Indians; they can cross any part of the country in perfect safety; a mere gesture commands instant obedience. . . their wishes become law and any Indian considers himself

fortunate to have deserved the privilege of doing a white man's bidding."
(59:526-528)

"Most tribes are gentle and peace-loving; however there have been periods of internecine warfare, and few tribes, except the Loucheux, have not bloodied their hands in combats even with white people."
(59:496)

"The *Dindjié* and *Dènè* have learned from white people how to build shacks, play the fiddle, wear black frock-coats or tartan shawls."
(4:V)

18.3.3 Economic

". . . they trade in furs and dry provisions to supply the trading posts that the Hudson's Bay Company established a long time ago among them."
(11:107)

"Fur trading requires of the *Dènè-dindjié* that they make frequent trips to the trading posts. They go to them in small groups at different times of the year, but attend in crowds only in the spring and fall, to coincide with the arrival or departure of the barges or boats of the Hudson's Bay Company. On both those occasions, all the least distant tribes gather around their respective forts, where they arrive in flotillas of pirogues (*ttsi, ella, ttsi*), or on rafts (*χédhi, χéni, χaon*). At other times of the year, the Indians come on foot. The tracks made in the snow by their long snowshoes constitute those long and winding trails (*t'unlu, t'inlu, ghè*) that meander through the woods."
(14:XXVI)

"The smoked meat. . . is tied up in bundles of "cinq pelus" (five skins) and bartered, in the forts of the Hundson's Bay Company for hunting ammunition and for tobacco. The tongue, the fat and sinews of animals killed in the hunt are mediums of exchange."
(14:XXVI)

"*Pelu* is the name give to a beaver pelt. It is the country's standard medium of exchange, whose value is 2 shillings (2 1/2 francs). A skinned beaver is called "pelu-en-viande" (pelu-in-meat), valued at half of the other one which is called "pelu-en-poil" (haired pelu)."
(14:XXVI)

PART II

THE LOUCHEUX INDIANS

14. Emile Petitot in Loucheux costume

INTRODUCTION

"... a small tribe of the Loucheux, known as the *Idha-Kuttchin*, "the mountain dwellers", were nearly all cross-eyed. French-Canadians have applied the name to the entire Loucheux nation."
(74:835)

"The Loucheux have been called Quarellers by Mackenzie, because of their wrangles with the Eskimos. Richardson, in the belief that he was applying to them their proper name, changed the epithet to that of *Kuttchin*, which means "people".
(74:836)

1. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

1.1 Territory

For the various names and habitats of the Loucheux bands, please refer to Section 1.1 (Territory) in Part I of this volume.

"... some Loucheux of the *Kwitcha-Kuttchin* tribe (people of the heath-lands) or *Kodhéll-ven-Kuttchin* (people on the edge of the steppes) whose territory extends to the north-west of Eskimos fort, between the river *Syo-tchro-gunli-nillen*, the Arctic Ocean and the Mackenzie River. It is an area of sparse woods, dwarf fir-trees never more than fifteen feet in height and dotted with clumps of willow trees (*kokray*), marshes (*nita*) and of heath (*kwitcha*). This bleak plateau is called the floor (*Ontc-yè-nendjigae*)."
(126:186)

"... those *Dindjié Van-ta-Kuttchin*... known to the other small tribes of the same language as the *Tdha-Kuttchin*, "mountain people". *Nattsu-Kuttchin*, "farthermost people". the *Klô-ven-Kuttchin* or people at the edge of the grassy plateaus: and finally as the *Dakkadh* or "squinters". These Indians are the ones Sir John Franklin referred to as the *Deguthee-Dennee*."
(5:275)

"... the people of the back country, i.e., who live inside the forests, *Tpè-ttchié dhidié* (people living far from the water). Richardson mistranslated that name as: "people sitting in the water." They are also known as the marmot people, *Neyttsè-Kuttchin*."
(5:301)

"... the *Intsi-dindjich* or "iron people", who hunt at the junction of Reindeer River. The *Tsoes-tsiég*, "fish beaters", also called *L'én-tsell*, "the Small-dogs."
(5:311)

"... from Fort Yukon... there came some *Dindjié* of the *Rhâne-Kuttchin* tribe or "river people". Accompanying the barge was a "bédare" or skin boat manned by *Kuttchin* Indians or "muskrat people". They hunt in the vicinity of Bell River or Rat River."
(5:276)

"... camp of 150 *Dindjié* in the steppes along the coast of the Arctic Sea... in November 1865. They were spread between Anderson River and the great Eskimo lake (*Sitidji-vann*)."
(5:177)

"... they generally occupy the delta formed by the Courier River (rivière du Courrier) and Porcupine River."
(5:287)

"The Loucheux *Nakotcho-ondjigoe-Kuttchin* hunt as far as the shores of Lake *Sitidjé-van*..."
(159:294)

1.2 Territorial limits

"Beyond Grouse Lake (lac des Gélinottes) we entered *dindjié* country."
(5:168)

"... the junction of the *L'é-ota-la-délin* River: limit between the *dindjié* country and Hareskin territory.
(4:224)

1.3 Inhabited sites

"... Point Separation, summer fishing-camp of the *Dindjié*."
(4:213)

"... Loucheux... gathered at the mouth of the *Tsikka-tchig* River, one of the northernmost tributaries of the Mackenzie River or *Nakotsian-Kotcho* the Loucheux name for which is *Nakotcho-ontchig*."
(145:66)

"At *Tsi-kka-tchig*, we found most of the *Dindjié*."
(4:214)

"... I reached Middle Lake (lac du Milieu) on the shores of which there was a third *dindjié* camp. It was made up of five families."
(5:186)

'... we were going to camp with *Dzjen*, the Muskrat, in the vicinity of Middle Lake (*Ekkidatpag tchion*)... That camp was composed of only four huts... they belong to the *Nattséin-kpet* camp, or camp of the Black, the camp of the Men from the Left."
(5:181)

'... at Lake *Voecha-édhéhen*... I saw two tents and three families in this last camp... whose inhabitants were *Ki-Yin*, *Sida-Jen*, *Van-lin*, *Schi-tey*, *Vi-taedh*, *Voe-lun*, etc.
(5:191-192)

1.4 Forts visited by the Loucheux

1.4.1 Fort Good Hope

"... on the Mackenzie River... the site of old Fort Good Hope. It was washed away by a flood in 1836, and rebuilt on its present site.
(4:121)

"...before the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company... the *Dindjié*...used to get their supplies at Fort Good Hope, at that time the northernmost fort in America..."
(4:197)

"... at one time, the Loucheux patronized Fort Good Hope, which, for that reason, is known in the Mackenzie area solely as the Loucheux's fort. At the present time, they have retired northward and take their furs to Fort MacPherson."
(74:835-836)

1.4.2 Fort MacPherson

"... (When Fort Anderson was abandoned in 1866) the Anderson *Dindjié* went up to Fort MacPherson, on Peel River."
(5:253)

"... because of the scarcity of reindeers, the *Dindjié* of the lower Mackenzie came to hunt at the source of the waters... of Manuel Lake (lac à Manuel). Their camp was composed of 14 huts... There had been two deaths in their camp. They had had ample cause to complain against the new clerk at Fort MacPherson, who last fall (1877) had sent them away without providing them with allowances for the winter... Accordingly, they were definitely resolved to patronize and to supply Fort Good Hope, as in the good old days, and never to set foot again at Fort Eskimo."
(83:370-371)

1.4.3 Fort Lapierre's House

"At the Fort Lapierre trading post there are no more than about ten families which, in the wintertime scatter in the valleys and, in the summertime, subsist on fishing along the *Tchi-ven-tchig* or the Porcupine River. I say only about thirty men; and yet the entire tribe was there. Those *Dindjié* are of the *Tdha-Kuttchin* tribe."
(170:167)

1.4.4 Fort Yukon of the Ramparts

"At Fort Yukon of the Ramparts I saw about one hundred and fifty men from the three tribes: *Kwitcha-Kuttchin* (giant people), *Tchan-djoeri-Kuttchin* (marmot people) and *Dzjèn-la-Kuttchin* (muskrat people)."
(170:173)

2. PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

2.1 Anthroposcopic description

"The *dindjié* people represents. . . a great mixture of races. Three or four main types are noted:

1. a round, wide, sallow face, with small and sharply slanting eyes, a rudimentary nose, and very thick lips;
2. black eyes, almost black complexion, nostrils sharply upturned;
3. aquiline and flattened nose, bulging forehead;
4. a floury white type."

(56:565)

"The *Dindjié* of Peel River, of the Mackenzie and of Anderson River. . . have, as general characteristics, a flattened occiput. . . a brachycephalic skull, a long and prognathous face, a big, undershot chin, a wide and fleshy mouth, a nose whose septum has been perforated, large dark eyes. . . close to the root of the nose."
(5:275-276)

"The *Dindjié* Loucheux has an elongated head, the occiput naturally flat, without any deformation, a prognathous jaw, an aquiline nose. . ."
(Bordier:61)

"The *Dindjié's* cranial characteristics are fairly general. They are: a wide skull, oblong and elongated from front to back, a naturally flat occiput without any artificial deformation. The forehead is straight and bulging, the face generally long, the lower jaw inordinately long."
(56:565)

"The *Dindjié's* legs are shapely but half-bent forward."
(56:565)

"Their women are very handsome and much whiter than the men. There is. . . among them an element of flat, floury, whiteness."
(11:14)

3. DEMOGRAPHY

3.1 Composition of the population

"There are about 400 of them in the Mackenzie area, but they number about 4000 in the Alaska territory."
(72:835)

"If we ascribe to each of the three American forts now established along the Yukon River and to the English fort a population of about 600, we get a total of 3,000 souls in the *Dindjié* nation on the west slope of the Rocky Mountains. I believe this figure in excess of reality."
(168:174)

"In Alaska, there are no more than 2,000 *Dindjié* people."
(5:311)

". . . the Loucheux population of the two Yukon forts does not exceed 1,000 souls."
(168:174)

"Fort MacPherson (Peel River), 1866, including Lapierre's House: *Dindjié* 290 people."
(70:653)

"On June 11, 1877, at Fort MacPherson, the Loucheux numbered one hundred and fifty to two hundred."
(4:295)

"The small fort called Lapierre's House was being supplied by thirty *Dindjié* Indians (June 1870) of the *Van-ta-Kuttchin* tribe i.e. "Lakes People"."
(5:271)

3.2 Diseases and physical handicaps

"(in 1867-1868) the typhus or a nervous fever decimated the Loucheux."
(138:296)

". . . strabismus seems to be the congenital physical defect of the *Dindjié*. It was among those Indians that I saw the first Redskins who were hump-backed, misshapen or with tooth trouble."
(5:180)

". . . the number of stammerers among the *Dindjié*: 5 stammerers out of 150 people."
(3:289)

4. LINGUISTICS

For information regarding Petitot's contribution to the Loucheux linguistics, the reader is referred to the chapter on *Dènè-dindjié* linguistics in Part I of this volume.

4.1 Vernacular

"The Loucheux pidgin, used in the Yukon and among the *Dindjié* of Peel River, is made up of scraps of French, English, *Tchippewyan*, Slave, *Dindjié* and even Cree vocabularies. It is not used in the Mackenzie, where Slave vernacular predominates. The latter comprises only French, Cree and *Dènè* Slave elements."
(5:292-293)

MATERIAL CULTURE

15. *Dindjié* camp near *Ídzji-nétlyé* Lake

5. WEAPONS

5.1 Raw material

"And now I must tell about the locations where the Loucheux get the material they use in making their weapons. The kersantite and the orthoclastic feldspar out of which they made their arrowheads, are cobblestones picked up on banks of their rivers and the beaches of inland lakes. Pebbles of crystalline rocks are found there in prodigious quantities. Some of them are two to three feet in diameter. Piles of them rise to great heights at the tip of headlands, islands and islets. Huge quantities of them also occur on the alluvial strands bordering the Mackenzie River. Two leagues this side of Fort Good Hope, and also at the place called Mackenzie Strait, there are phonolite steeprocks that look like natural ramparts.
(48:402-403)

5.2 Hand Weapons

". . . they made use of crescent-shaped stone knives."
(30:688)

"The *Dindjié* have a knife of traditional shape, the *chsi*."
(56:564)

6. TRANSPORTATION

6.1 Navigation

"They make themselves boats covered with reindeer hides, but they have no canoes because of the total lack of birch trees in the mountains. As a substitute they use *cawn*, triangular rafts the tops of which are provided with a kind of flooring surrounded by a rough guard-rail."
(168:167)

"Their rafts, (*phaôn*), which means "drifting" (from *phâne*, river), are made of whole trees laced next to one another with strips of willow, in such a way that all the three tops are joined at one end and all the trunks at the other. This forms large isosceles triangles whose bases, much heavier than the apex, always float forward downstream. This type of construction prevents the *phaôns* from spinning or from grounding on the shallows. Across this first layer, the *Dindjié* put a few trimmed trunks acting as a stringer and on which they lay a second layer identical to the first, but surrounded by a rough guard-rail. Two big oars, roughly adzed, propel the

heavy machine forward whenever the current lags. Some of the Loucheux build themselves some tiny high-floating *rhâons*, on which they sit."
(5:286-287)

7. HOUSING

7.1 Framework

"The *dindjié* tents, *nivia*, are hemispheric, roomy, closed by a suspended door-curtain and made of two layers of reindeer hide, hair inside, which make them much warmer than *déné* lodges. Their shape is that of an outdoor oven. The hearth is made of a pile of limestones that rises above the lodge's floor of trampled earth. The floor, besides the inevitable fir-tree branches, is covered with haired reindeer hides, carefully laid out and neatly kept."
(5:181)

"Their lodges are small brushwood huts, in some cases covered with reindeer hides or goat-skins, which are less than four feet high and six feet in diameter."
(168:167)

"Nothing can be so squalid as the summer huts of those Indians. To make one they bend towards the ground the branches of a willow-tree, and on that support they throw a moose hide or a few reindeer skins sewn together, and scatter a few green boughs under this shelter. . ."
(5:288)

7.2 Fuel

"The most unusual fish in the Porcupine River is the candlefish; it is so oily that the Loucheux use it as a torch, lighting it at the end and letting it burn to the other."
(168:171)

"Both in the tundra (*kwitcha*) and the reindeer grazing grounds (*kodhell*), the sole resource of the *Dindjié* is a small, evergreen creeping heather, that grows profusely. . . It has the singular property of burning while still green, or even heavy with moisture. It is the Andromeda tetragona, that the Loucheux call *Shinoetlya*. . . a word which describes the overlapping and braided-like appearance of a quadrangular cord."
(5:179)

8. CLOTHING

8.1 Body

8.1.1 Head

"Their tunics have no hood, the Loucheux' only headgear being a wide band of blue and white beadwork, extending from ear to ear and with little strips of it floating down over the shoulders. Today only the chiefs are privileged to wear that diadem."
(59:532)

8.1.2 Shoulders

"Their summer clothing is of reindeer skins, their winter garments of white hareskins. Their chlamys (mantle), which extends to below the knee, has a tail-like netherpiece both in front and in the back; it is completed by a wide cape and is the same for men and for women."
(11:14)

"The *Dindjié* and the *Danè-Ingalit* are the northernmost *tchippewa-wéyan* tribes, i.e. with mantles of pointed skins or with swallow-tail clothes fore and aft. This costume, which at one time was worn by all *Dènè-dindjié* Indians, has practically disappeared to-day. It has been replaced first by the hunting tunic of smoked hide, short, round cut a little lower than the belt, and later by the European coat or jacket."
(5:310)

"I did not see a single Loucheux from Fort Yukon of the Ramparts who had preserved the old-time Loucheux costume: leather tunics with fringed tailpieces and trousers sewn to the footgear and decorated, like the tunic, with porcupine quill embroidery, beadwork and gashed leather fringe."
(170:173)

"They wear clothes of reindeer skin, hair inside and outside. The clothes consist of a jerkin or tunic, *ézjég-hik*, whose flaps, broadly notched over the hips taper sharply in front and in the back. The women's garment is like the men's, but longer and with rounded apron-pieces."
(59:532)

8.1.3 Hips

"The Loucheux wear, in addition to the tunic, trousers made of the same material, that are richly decorated, and sewn to the footwear. This garment is worn by both men and women."
(14:XXIV)

8.1.4 **The foot**

"Their foot covering is an integral part of the trousers, which is also worn by the women."
(11:14)

8.2 **Ornaments**

"The inevitable accessories to that costume are the wampum beads or shells *etsuzi, etsay, nakay,* the most appreciated of which are the big blue beads produced in Russian factories, and the long white shells that come from the Pacific. Those beads are worn as necklaces, as bracelets, or as fringe on the edge of garments. They are also worn all along the legs down to the instep. Those Indians also wear hanging from their neck a slender and longish whetstone of serpentine or amphibole, which they use to hone the large dagger (*chi*) held beneath their belt. Wampum beads and shells are the Loucheux's greatest wealth; they are immensely prized by their owners who take pride in accumulating large quantities of them which they then bequeath to their children. A complete Loucheux costume decorated with its *nakay* costs 40 to 60 "pelus" (pelts), i.e. 80 to 120 francs."
(59:532-533)

8.3 **Inside the house**

"As soon as they enter into their lodge, the *Dindjié* take off their traveling costume. . . and put on indoor garments, more ordinary or longer worn."
(5:181)

". . . they abhor nudity."
(11:14)

8.4 **Home craft and Maintenance**

". . . they make thread out of willow bark. That tree must be the Salix speciosa. The *Dindjié* call it *énéttchidi*."
(89:70)

9. **ADORNMENT**

9.1 **Ornaments**

9.1.1 **Nose**

"The Loucheux perforate their nasal septum from which they hang ornaments."
(13:XXVIII)

"Nearly all of them had a perforated septum hanging down over their mouth. . . but without the swan-bone ornament that, in the old days, they used to wear as a nose pendant."
(5:276-277)

9.1.2 **Hair**

". . . I did not see a single man who had preserved the old-time fashion of wearing his hair hanging in the back, gathered there in a big bun through which three eagle feathers were skewered."
(5:189)

". . . likewise no longer to be seen among the Loucheux at Fort Yukon of the Ramparts. . . are the long locks of hair that used to fall over their shoulders and stuck with three eagle feathers, or the decorative headband of white Dentalium shells."
(170:173)

". . . they rub into their hair a mixture of clay, animal fat and the down of duck or swan."
(14:XXX)

10. **METHODS OF LIVELIHOOD**

10.1 **Annual cycle**

"The *Rhâne-Kuttchin,* after hunting the argali and the bighorn on the *Tdha-tséïn* or Rockies, come down to the banks of the *Tsé-ondjig* after the break-up, build rafts which they load with furs and provisions, and float down that river up to Fort Yukon, with their families. Once they have finished their trading, they cross over to the right bank, where they leave their heavy and unwieldy craft, and go out to pass the summer on the ridges of the *Tdha-tcha* whence they repair to the *Tdha-tséïn* come snow time."
(5:286)

10.2 **Hunting**

"Hunting technique: Traveling on the lake, I saw some *shils* or hunting palisades enclosing a vast area of tundra and of woods, stretching to the end of the lake. That fencing is made of dead trees, roughly tangled up; at intervals along the fencing, there are openings or doors across which thongs or laces of catgut are woven. The reindeer are driven towards the pound; forced to get in; forced to seek an escape by way of the webbed openings where they get tangled up and strangled by the lacing."
(5:192)

10.3 **Fishing**

"After the barren-ground reindeer, the chief article of diet of those Indians is the Coregonus or whitefish."
(5:180)

11. FOOD SUPPLY

11.1 **Preservation**

11.1.1 **Preservation containers**

". . . they have preserved the memory of aerial houses built on poles. Right next to their lodges, there are tiny sharp-gabled houses, perched on poles twelve to fifteen feet high. These are no longer, or hardly ever, lived in. They are used merely as store-houses for their stores of smoked venison, dried fish, and pelts. . . they climb up to them by means of a cleated board. They like to nap in them on occasion or to sleep in them on hot summer nights."
(58:547)

11.2 **Foodstuffs**

11.2.1 **Fish**

". . . the *Dindjié* eat of a certain red and oily fish that they call *dhikki*. They eat it raw.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

12. FAMILY

12.1 Marital relationship

12.1.1 Choice of a mate

". . . a division of the *dindjié* nation into three camps, independent of the nobility or *tchill-hè*. Those camps are the *Etchian-Kpét*, i.e. "people of the Right", or Whites; the *Natséïnkpét* or "people of the Left", or Blacks; the *Trendjidheyttsetpkét* or "people of the Middle", i.e. the Browns. It is strictly forbidden to any *Dindjié*, man or woman to seek a marriage partner in the camp to which he or she belongs through his or her mother. The mate has to be chosen in one of the other camps. By right, the children all belong to the mother's camp. When I left the Mackenzie in 1878, not even one *Nattseïn* was left. The *Dindjié* were all considered Whites or Browns."
(5:311-312)

12.1.2 Polygamy

". . . they have no scruples at all about polygamy."
(11:14)

12.1.3 Forms of dissociation

". . . they have no scruples at all. . . about divorce."
(11:14)

12.2 Family behaviour

12.2.1 Between husband and wife

". . . they are good to their wives, whose advice they often heed to the point of looking upon them as chiefs."
(11:14)

"A Loucheux woman, beaten by her husband, avenged herself by breaking her child's head against a rock."
(59:529)

12.3 Terminology

". . . in the *Kouchâ-Kouttchin* dialect of Alaska, and among the *Dindjié* on the lower Mackenzie, parents call any male child of theirs "my man" (*soe dindjié*); and when they say: "so and so's man", it means "so and so's son."
(15:96)

13. COMMUNITY

13.1 Community structure

". . . on their territory, the Loucheux were scattered in bands of five or six families living together in spherical tents made of reindeer skins."
(126:186)

13.2 Chiefs

"The word chief, *pakpè*, in the *dindjié* dialect of the lower Mackenzie, becomes *kakpey* in the Yukon dialect."
(5:293)

"Husbands are good to their wives, whose advice they often heed to the point of looking upon them as chiefs: *Rakrey*, *Toyon*."
(11:14)

". . . the *Dindjié* of the *Van-ta-Kuttchin* tribe have as chief Hareskin Hood, *Khé-dhow-tsé*."
(5:274)

13.3 Priests (jugglers)

"Among the *Dindjié*, the conjuror's science is called magic (*schian*). . . and their charmers are known as *tazjian*, magicians."
(15:27)

13.4 Community control

". . . among them there are no such things as laws, or punishments, or rewards."
(11:14)